



Dr. S. Radhakrishnan

P. NAGARAJA RAO



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## The Intellectual Climate of the Age

The time India came under the British rule it produced different reactions from the citizens. The introduction of the universal education, spread of English Language and establishment of various Universities all over India evoked three types of reaction among Indians. The newly educated minority with all admiration for English education looked upon traditional values and discredited all religions rites, ceremonies and practices. They adopted the western ways of dress and the top hat and the tail coat became the fashion of the day. For them Indian things were uncivilised and boorish.

A second group of people were Fundamentalists who hated the British ways of life and language. They saw no wisdom and culture anywhere except in India; believed in caste system and described non-Indians as outcastes. Warren Hastings, the first Governor General found it next to impossible to get a copy of *Bhagavat Gita*. They thought that none but the Brahmins should touch the *Gita*. This group did not know anything outside India. They idealised the past and called it the golden age and lived by the dictates of the scriptures. They looked upon all changes as catastrophic.

There was a third group who had the benefit of the English education and still loved Indian culture. They did not debunk tradition nor discredit science. They took from the past altars only fire and not smoke. They did not allow the past to be an incubus. They only took inspiring lessons from the past and introduced large doses of modernity in their life. They said, "He who says that all

culture and philosophy are only in India, knows no other cultures." They had faith in future and did not allow their minds to be suppressed. Their minds were not cribbed, cabined and confined. They believed in truth and its pursuit. They opposed blind credibility, blank acceptance and slavish dogmatism. They sifted the grain from the husk in Indian culture. These thinkers marked the advent of Renaissance of India. To this group belonged Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Vidyasagar, Vivekananda, Gandhiji, Jawaharlal Nehru, Aurobindo and others. These thinkers found and wrote a new chapter in Indian Philosophy. They were the creative minds. They were severely opposed by the orthodox. They were inspired by the vedas and experiences of the several sages. They brought their vision down to earth, clothed them with emotions, carved them into words and cast them into philosophy. These thinkers marked the glorious Renaissance of Indian culture and philosophy during the nineteenth and twentieth century.

Dr. Radhakrishnan, the hero of this book belongs to this group. He had the influence of western education and infinite love for India's message. He wanted his mind not to be walled on all sides and the windows to be stuffed and thus allowed all the cultural winds of the world to blow on him. He is the chief example of modern Indian thinkers. He was not happy with Hinduism as it was. Nor did he throw away the baby with the bath. In the following pages, an attempt is made to set forth and assess his contribution to Indian philosophical thought.



## Early Life

**R**adhakrishnan was born in a Hindu family. His ancestors came from the village Sarvepalli in the east coast, two hundred miles away from Madras. He was born on 5 September 1887. However, he believed it was not 5 September but 20 September 1887. His father was Veeraswami and mother Seethamma. He was the second son of the poor Brahmin couple. Till he was eight years old he had his early education at Tiruttani. He learnt elementary English, Telugu, Arithmetic, Geography and Indian History. The school in which he read was closed at the outbreak of first world war. Radhakrishnan's parents were worried about their son's erratic behaviour of keeping away from his classes. Later, he went to Vellore for further education and had guidance from his uncle. Radhakrishnan passed his matriculation examination which secured him a scholarship and he joined for his B.A. in Madras Christian College. Radhakrishnan loved books. He was influenced by Vivekananda's eloquent appeal to Indian youth to have self-respect and patriotism. The First War of Independence influenced Radhakrishnan most. He was a shy lonely boy over years. He loved solitude and enjoyed books. There was also a social side to him which he cultivated at Vellore. His habits of life were simple. He never smoked throughout his life nor tasted liquor and lived on simple vegetarian food. His chief relaxation used be at music concerts held in villages.

His hundred rupee scholarship helped him to buy a few books and to entertain his friends.

At Madras Christian College Radhakrishnan was known for his intelligence. Radhakrishnan was 16, when he was married to Shivakamu aged 10, daughter of a railway official. It was an arranged marriage. Sivakamu joined Radhakrishnan three years after the wedding.

The first child born was a daughter and during the next 15 years he had six more children. His only surviving son Dr.Gopal is the historical and definitive biographer of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and his selected works have been published by Government of India.

Radhakrishnan loved family life. His wife was not an intellectual. She accepted the duties of home life. She helped him to go through his busy life and looked after his needs. Her life was one of unquestioning service and dedication. On his part, he took pride in bringing medals and honours from academics. He had on occasions borrowed money to buy jewels for his wife. She was an ideal Hindu wife. He was fond of quoting the German Philosopher Hegel who said, "A man has made up his account with life when he has work that suits and a wife who loves him." Radhakrishnan's life at Madras Christian College, where he did his M.A. Philosophy was significant. Principal William Miller admired Radhakrishnan's talents and encouraged him in his study. Radhakrishnan came out of his M.A. examination with laurels. His thesis for M.A., "The ethics of vedanta and its metaphysical pre-suppositions", earned for him great honour. This work gave him confidence, courage and conviction.

Grinding poverty at home with a large family that he had to support, his mother and three younger brothers, on retirement of his father, made him incur large debts. He gave private tuition and contributed to the upkeep of the family.

Radhakrishnan's first appointment was at Madras Presidency College, where he remained for five years. His



power of speech, his lectures without referral notes, attracted not only students of Philosophy but also others. The Professor had an inner feeling that God guides his activities from post to post. He was one for whom the light always turned green on cross-roads.

From Madras, he was appointed at Mysore, as Professor of Philosophy. He enjoyed his life enormously teaching at Mysore. He read a lot and wrote a lot. He contributed several articles to the foreign journals and contemporary European thinkers—Bergson, Russel, William James and others. He brought these articles together in a volume under the caption, "Reign of Religion in Contemporary Philosophy," It is at Mysore that his admiration for the poet Tagore, grew. He wrote a very interesting and fluent book on the Philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore. He began to carve a place for himself in the world of Philosophy. There was a certain dignity about the Professor. He was not negligent about his dress. He worked out for himself a dress which suited him best, a long silk coat buttoned upto the neck, reaching down to the knees, a clean white dhoti with a black border, black slippers and above all a white muslin turban. This was his attire till the end of his life.

God was very kind to Radhakrishnan in giving lifts in life. He was hardly thirty-five when Sir A. Mukerjee invited him to occupy the George V Chair of Philosophy at King George V Chair of mental and moral science in the University of Calcutta. He was very friendly with Alladi Krishnaswamy Iyer and Subbaya Iyer the famous lawyer. It is interesting to mention Sir Mohammed Usman. He once asked Radhakrishnan to help him pass his B.A. examination. Radhakrishnan gave him lessons in logic. Not only did he pass his exams, but also became the Governor of Madras. At Madras, Radhakrishnan was influenced by the speeches of Besant at Adyar whom he admired.

At Calcutta he achieved all his laurels. He was there as Professor for a very long time. He wrote his two volumes of Indian Philosophy and visited America and England for his lectures. He became a public figure of repute and was awarded the knighthood. He was elevated as Spalding Professor at Oxford, which chair he held in great reputation.

He was the first Asian to be appointed to the *world platform of culture—Oxford*.

Radhakrishnan began to admire the Congress attempt to earn freedom for India. Though he did not actually join the freedom struggle, he was warmly backing it. He dedicated his English translation of the *Bhagavad Gita* to Mahatma Gandhi. It is on record here, that Gandhiji said, "I am like Arjuna, you are my Krishna. You could not have written anything wrong." The Professor loved to be called an Acharya and to justify it, he translated the Upanishads when he was Ambassador to the USSR. He completed the translation with *Brahma Sutras*. He was hailed as the modern *Bashyakara* of the neo-Vedanta School.

His academic reputation, political fervour, knowledge of men and things and the blessings of fortune made Jawaharlal Nehru elect him as the Vice-President of the Indian Union, unopposed. He remained and ruled the proceedings of the Rajya Sabha for 10 years. In 1961 came the crowning achievement of the Professor when he became the President of India.



## Political Career

Radhakrishnan was not a Professor who confined himself to interpreting and writing on Indian Philosophical Classics and works on religion. He was actively interested in two other topics, India's freedom and Indian Education. He believed that the individual cannot rest satisfied unless he got the plan of life and the purpose of his existence. One cannot live happily without a firm conviction in a creed sanctioned by the canon's logic and supported by human feeling. If you don't have conviction in a creed and belief in an ideal, your conduct would be wavered and energy dissipated. Belief in creed and conviction result in conduct. The human being who is full of desires has naturally a distracted mind, which fed on by outside trinkets, trumps and trivialities of life go out for them. Concentration and singleness of mind alone can give us mind control. On a winter night the great German Philosopher Schopenhuer was seated in a park. The caretaker of the park rushed to the philosopher and asked him, as to why he was there at that late hour. What was his purpose? The philosopher answered, that precisely was the problem. We all have to unlock the meaning of life and the purpose of existence.

If you go about life as if sauntering through the vast fields we will not reach the goal. Like an intelligent farmer, we have to weed out the thorns, water the plants and cultivate. Radhakrishnan from the beginning of his life was aware that what mattered most was direction and not mere speed. You cannot drive your car on neutral gear. You must know where to go and when to reach.

In all his talks, Radhakrishnan insisted on the essential difference between man and animal. Human being has to make his choice, decision. He cannot wander through life. Freedom of human will is the fundamental postulate of morality. If you deny freedom of will, it reduces human being to a gadget or a robot. Man is at the Crown of God's creation. He stands at cross-roads of all civilisation. He has to choose between two paths—pleasant existence and enduring happiness. If he does not choose enduring happiness, he lapses into the first path. If he does not ascend heaven high, he sinks hell deep. Progress in human life is walking on an inclined plane. There is no halting. Either one goes up or goes down the theme of the two ideals of life. It figures in more than half a dozen of his books and hundreds of lectures. Plato described the two paths under the caption opinion and knowledge, Christ called it way of life and death, Kant called it inclination and duty, Upanishads called, the path of light and darkness and biologists described it as ape and essence. Man has to choose. That is the first step. Then he must love the ideal and make an absolute commitment. With this strong belief and spiritual idealism, the Professor moved on to the political scene.

Radhakrishnan was one of those who believed that man must live, eat, have shelter, sex, raiment etc. He was not a communist in the sense that entailed the belief anti-Godism, violent destruction of capitalism, casteless society, the rule of the proletariat and the like. But the communism of Radhakrishnan was spiritual communism. It was on Gandhian model. When we confront evil or violence the matter grows worse. Violence is suppressed by great violence and that in its turn by greater violence. That is the record of bloody war and intrigue. In the first quarter of the century we had two world wars and a total violent revolution in Russia. Peace is the cry of the nation. Men have to change before societies are reformed. If men



have absurd idealism they cut in an atrocious manner. Unimproved men cannot grow improved society.

Men do not live isolated lives. They live and grow amidst other men. Civilisation is a co-operative adventure. It implies mutual involvement. If I have to live happily, enjoying the pleasures of life, I need the co-operation of other men and necessary tact and talent to get along. I need self control which in turn is determined by the mind control.

Radhakrishnan believed that politics and ethics are connected. He took the post of Ambassador at Moscow after Pandit Nehru's sister. He was comfortable in Moscow. He wanted India and USSR to build friendly relations. He sought to introduce Marxian ideology without its violence and anti-Godism. He believed inequality was appalling. He often cited a passage from the *Bhaghavata*: "One who takes more than what is necessary for his life from the public stock is a thief". In Moscow he could not do much. He read and translated the Upanishads. For a detailed account of the political work that Radhakrishnan did at Moscow please refer to chapter 9 of Radhakrishnan's biography by Dr. S. Gopal.

One important incident at Moscow is unforgettable. At a leave taking function Dr. Radhakrishnan met Stalin and boldly patted him on his back and cheek. After receiving the pat, Stalin observed, " You are the only man who treated me as a human being, " Radhakrishnan said, "We had a monarch in India who fought several battles and wars and after his conquest of Kalinga, he realised wars are futile, politically stupid and economically useless."

The next great political assignment that Professor had from Government of India was Vice-Presidentship. He held the post for two terms. It is here in Delhi that he

developed the friendship with Nehru. Nehru took to Radhakrishnan very kindly and was appreciative of his talent and ability.

Friendship between Nehru and Radhakrishnan is not only significant but interesting. The post of Vice-President, according to the constitution was merely a decorative one. It was a caged office. The Vice-President's role was only to preside over the Rajya Sabha proceedings and conduct it. The role of the detached spectator was well suited to the philosopher. The Prime Minister's effort to give the Professor a solid place in the conduct of foreign policy and to have contacts with other nations was frustrating. However, Nehru gave Radhakrishnan a requisite status and power to exercise influence on State Government. In addition he was given the same right as the President and the Prime Minister to utilise the V.I.P. Squadron of the Indian Air Line.

Radhakrishnan presided over Rajya Sabha for more than ten years. He was respected by the opposition and the ruling party alike. He made the proceedings full of wise sayings and retained the right of every member to speak. Once he told an opposition member, "I may disagree with all that you say, but I will insist on your right to say it." Throughout, the Professor pleaded for a liberal non-violent socialistic pattern of society. He abhorred timidity and upheld courage. He said that without courage no virtue can thrive. With courage all virtues are in double strength. He did not plead for carelessness. He stood for calculated courage taking note of all the factors into consideration. He was up against habitual compromises." If a social revolution were achieved without destroying the Soul of Indian and its people, this could be had only by safeguarding political liberty, economic equity and social justice." He told press that Nehru could do it and without him country would drift to extreme reaction and complete anarchy.



Nehru thought that Radhakrishnan could initiate policies which were in complete accord with his views. The Professor in turn was influenced by Nehru and stood for planned and controlled parenthood. The Professor argued that without family planning no planning will succeed. He also argued against Gandhian and Roman Catholic views that abstinence from sex is also a form of interference with nature. Hence there should be no objection to scientific methods of planning population. In this the Professor embodies the spirit of New India.

The twelve years of friendship with Nehru between 1952-1964 is remarkable. They were thrown closely together. There was warm natural attachment. Both of them were different in their prominence. One born to affluence and another to poverty. They had dissimilar temperaments, one hot and impulsive and another steady and soft. It is common interest and love of Indian humanity and faith in nature that united them. They took delight in each other's vitality and view of life. They believed that fundamentally man is good. Towards the close of Panditji's life, he began to love Radhakrishnan more and more. The Professor was critical of the slow way in which the Congress ruling party was proceeding. He once wrote to Nehru, " You are a very good man with a sound sense of the good of the people but the pity is you have fallen in the company of conservatives." He did not reply because he thought the Professor was hyper-critical. The Professor was not effective in getting out Menon in the settlement of Kashmir issue despite Nehru's health. I am no student of politics to go into details of administration. But this much I can observe that Radhakrishnan proved a super parliamentarian during the proceedings of the Rajya Sabha. He could sit for six hours a day for two months at a time. On no occasion did the Professor hesitate to rebuke even the Prime Minister, if necessary. He again and again pleaded for decency and generosity in the speeches of his members. He even called

to order the communist leader Bhupesh Gupta who was known for his sharp tongue and well stocked facts in his mind. He accepted Radhakrishnan's admonitions as he did in the class room when the Professor taught him philosophy.

As fate would have it, Nehru could not have his way to make Radhakrishnan President after the five years. The ruling party and the Congress High Command were in favour of Dr. Rajendra having a second term. This made the Professor stay on as Vice-President for the second time. Radhakrishnan held the post of Vice-Presidentship for a decade, and then was elected as President of India in 1961.

## Radhakrishnan as President

After 10 years of Vice-Presidentship, the Professor was elected unanimously as the Congress candidate for the exalted position of the President of Indian Union. As President, he was aware of the responsibilities; he was not worried about the powers and prerogative of the President as laid down in the Constitution. These principles added up to nothing in practice. The role of the President was to draw attention to the values of Indian civilisation and that of the Prime Minister to the Government. Radhakrishnan's friendship with Nehru was very cordial and for the first time the President's office became really powerful and acquired significance.

The important events that were significant in his regime are, on the request of the national federation of teachers, the fifth September, Professor Radhakrishnan's birthday, is being celebrated every year as Teacher's day. Nehru was responsible for it. The Professor's attempt to abolish capital punishment except only in cases of treason or brutal murder, did not have its way. But in practice every mercy petition referred to the Professor was granted. He secured the transfer of vast buildings which had been constructed by the British as the Viceroy's residence in Shimla. Radhakrishnan got these buildings to house an Institute of Advanced Studies on the model of Princeton in America and all Souls in Oxford. The President was very harsh on Menon. He did not agree to his acts though Nehru was soft to him. In the beginning his relationship with Indira Gandhi was cordial. He knew her as a student of Oxford in 1937. He had developed an



affection for her. I cannot refrain from quoting his remarks when the Title "Bharat Ratna" was conferred on the President. She wrote to him: "You are widely recognised as true Ratna of Bharat for many years. But it is just as well to make it official. You have set a high standard for others Ratnas to follow--if they deserve the title as you truly do."

The only episode was Menon's removal from the cabinet. It was very difficult to get him out. Nehru accepted his resignation and forwarded to the President. He acted swiftly and was one with Rajagopalachari's suggestion to amend the constitution as to make the Prime Minister and the Cabinet act on the advice of the President. This happened in the case of Menon. The crisis was over. Radhakrishnan's visit to USA, and several other countries brought him fame. In USA, President Kennedy, who had high regard for the Professor, set aside the protocol and authorised for the first time the landing of the helicopter on the lawns of the White House. Mrs. Kennedy appeared for the first time in the official function. The banquet was lavish. There was great personal warmth between the two. The Professor remarked, "We cannot always control events, but we can change our attitudes."

It goes to the credit of the Publications Division of the Government of India that all Radhakrishnan's speeches as President were published profusely in five volumes. To read these speeches is liberal education. In every page of the speech we have a remarkable quotation from an Eastern classic or a Western thinker. Radhakrishnan's erudition was prodigious. No day lapsed without reading something new. What he read he used. The purple passages in his speeches dazzle us. He is a scholar statesman. It is no wonder that when he delivered his British Academy lecture on Gautama Buddha for full 45 minutes without being aided by even



a piece of paper, running 101 temperature, *The Hindu* for the first time reported the speech in three columns. At the conclusion of the lecture, in vote of thanks it was said, "it is not only a lecture on a master-mind but by a master-mind." Over the decades, the Professor was a hero of hundreds of platforms and as a President his speeches were published in large volumes and widely appreciated. He very nearly came near Plato, the Philosopher king. After Nehru's demise he introduced the practice that the senior most member of the cabinet should become the Prime Minister.

On January 8, Mrs. Indira Gandhi secured the support of all and became the Prime Minister. The wise madam always acted on her own and did not listen to others. Political wisdom, shrewd understanding of men and things, long experience, and above all great ancestry made her function independently in all her acts. The Professor's attitude towards the new Prime Minister was affectionate and non-serious.

The Professor retired and after retirement he never made any public appearance. He lived 81 years, but during the last period, he was in a state of unconsciousness for a long time. After holding important positions and posts, after enjoying life, after acquiring great fame and name, the Professor passed away on 17 April 1978.

## Radhakrishnan as Educationist

Next to freedom and philosophy, Radhakrishnan believed in education. He was a great educationist. A Professor of philosophy in four Universities, Madras, Mysore, Banaras and at Oxford, he was Chairman of the University Commission and pleaded for integral education. He believed that what distinguished a man from animal was his capacity to be educated. Education transforms a man from his animal existence into human excellence. Its aim is to illumine the human mind, overcome the ape in him, to develop a warm heart and above all a lively imagination. Radhakrishnan used to ask God in his prayer, to grant him understanding and tolerance. He believed not in materialistic but naturalistic way of education. He wanted education to revive our sensitivity. He believed that education in the mere sciences and technology would help a man only to become a better technician. A motor driver will become a better motor driver and not a better man. He pleaded for man-making education and wanted courage to come into the hearts of men.

He did not regard man as a mere body made up of a few pounds of carbon, a little sulphur, phosphorus, some lime and mixed salt. Nor is man different from his less exalted brothers, animals in the way of instincts and surge of emotions. Men fight for survival and their fight discloses their mean motive and narrow ideas. Education should aim at refinement.

Man was regarded by Radhakrishnan as a spiritual entity with a physical body. Service and technology have

given him gadgets and his science has made him conquer nature and plunder the planet. It has enabled him to fly in the air and swim under the seas. All these do not constitute the essence of man. Education has failed to enable a man to be in peace with himself. The distracted nature of the mind, his mental ailments, tension and other maladies are due to miseducation. Real and valid education cater to the needs of body, mind and personality. The Professor, in his tens of convocation addresses in the Universities, has outlined the role of education by introducing religion and philosophy as the most effective connection to the limitation of scientific and technological knowledge.

He was the Chairman of the University Commission and in that capacity, he visited all the 25 Universities in India and interviewed 2900 scholars and drew up the University Commission report. The report is a good document of immense significance. It outlined the educational policies, not only of universities but also of schools. The aim of education was to produce a world citizen. It aimed at the development of the body, mind and spirit of every individual. Education aimed at social justice and cultivation of the art of cordial human relationship.

The Commission recommended a sound religious education which was not dogmatic or sectarian. It aimed at giving a spiritual training, enabling the student to work out by free enquiry, his or her own approach to religion. The details are interesting.

1. Start the work everyday with a few moments of silent meditation.
2. Teach the students the life of great religious leaders.
3. Provide them with selections from the world scriptures.



The Commission recommended that education must not be a State subject but must be included in the concurrent list of Central Government.

In answer to the difficult problem of the medium of instructions, the Commission pleaded for the replacement of English as early as possible by an Indian language. But English should be taught even at school level. There should be no haste in introducing changes, in the medium of instruction. English should continue as the medium of education until such time the regional languages develop to take its place. The vexed problem of giving opportunity to merit and students of merit engaged the attention of the Commission. The Commission under the Professor's guidance, who was its chairman declared clearly that the distribution of educational opportunity should be on the basis of merit. There was the difficulty of implementing this idea in an egalitarian society. To accommodate this, it was recommended that one-third of the total seats be reserved for a period of ten years.

The sound idealism of the report and its pleasing proposals were admired by all scholars. Sir Richards Livingston, the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford commended the report to Christian countries also. The salaries of University teachers were raised. It is sad for me to observe that political interest and caste interest have seen that admission by merit is increasingly over-shadowed by the reservation of seats. The report was not fully put into action and was buried, with respectful inattention. The fact that Radhakrishnan was one of the greatest educationist can never be challenged.

## Radhakrishnan's Philosophy

Radhakrishnan would be remembered by generations by his numerous philosophical works. The first important work, that has raised him to the level of an *acharya* are his translations of the Upanishads, the Brahmasutras, and the *Bhagavat Gita*. The ancient *acharyas* of India like Sankara, Ramanuja and Madhva have held that their respective philosophical systems are not the result of the cogitations and excellence of intellectual ability and logical skill. They are based on the revelations of the Upanishads, interpreted in the light of Brahmasutras, excellently summarised in the *Bhagavat Gita*. This is the great difference between the European and the Indian philosophy. The West raises reasons to supreme heights, and the East upholds revelation. That does not mean the systems of Vedanta are lacking in logical acumen: they make use of reason in a limited manner in interpreting the scriptures. The *acharyas* who built the system of Vedanta were not opposed to reason, but they saw a faculty called spiritual experience, which the vedic seers had and have set down in their revelations in the vedas. The vedantic view is that the scriptures are not written by anybody (*apaurusheya*). They are not even the works of God as the Vedic school puts. They are revealed to sensitive sages.

Every *acharya* interprets the Upanishads which is the basic text. While interpreting it the *acharya* makes use of reason and applies the determinative marks of purport (*tatparya linga*) in understanding the Vedas. They interpret the Upanishads in the light of the Brahmasutras and hold

the view that all the three texts embody a unified system that is there.

All of them are subordinating the role of reason but not giving up. In this connection I am reminded of the wise observation on the topic of reason by Gandhiji, "Rationalists are admirable beings. Rationalism is a hideous monster, when it claims for itself omnipotence. Attribution to omnipotence to reason is as bad as a piece of idolatry as worship of sticks and stones believing them to the God. I plead not for suppression of reason but for a due recognition of that in us which sanctified reason."

Further rationalism has serious defects. If I argue a position and state the grounds for it, a clever man can refute them with better reasons. There is no end to it. There is no conclusiveness in the findings of reason.

In fact great scientific discoveries, immortal classics, celebrated paintings, soul stirring songs are the result of mystical experience than reasons. Hence, the Vedantic's faith, in a faculty higher than reasoning, is not a fault.

The Upanishads are the concluding portions of the Vedas. Ten or twelve of them are esteemed as essential ones. The Vedas have four parts—*mantras*—hymns, *Brahmanas*—prose passages which indicate the way at working of sacrifices; the third and the fourth are *Aranyakas* and *Upanishads* which give us the philosophy of Vedanta. Professor Mascaro defines the Upanishads as the Himalayas of the human soul. As those physical heights determine the climate and geography of India, these determine the spiritual climate of India.

When the Professor was in Moscow he undertook the task of translating the Upanishads. It was published in 1953 by George Allen & Co., London. The volume carries a long preface. The professor believes that the Upanishads constitute the essence of Vedanta. The Professor inclines to the view that we cannot systematise the Upanishads into a single strand of thought. There are several strands



in the Upanishads. This view is opposed by the tradition. The *acharyas* have differed. Sankara sees in the Upanishads monistic idealism. He holds the view that the ultimate reality is an Indeterminate Brahma (*nirguna*). It cannot be described by words. Applying the principle of parsimony, Sankara posits one category; Brahman. He explains the plurality of souls and the universe as the result of delusion (*maya*). The principle *maya* makes the Brahman as God and souls. The phenomenal world and the plurality of souls are the results of our own delusion with the onset of reflection and knowledge. The individual soul experiences that it is not different from Brahman. Sankara picks up a few statements which set forth the identity of Brahman and soul as the prime import of the Upanishads.

*Aham Brahmasmi Sarvamkalumidam Brahma  
Tat Twam Asi Ayamatma Brahma*

The Upanishads have two sets of statements. One describing the difference between the Brahman and the souls (*Bedha Shruthis*). There are fewer statements which have for their import identity. Sankara downgrades the first set of statements and upholds the second set.

In short Sankara posits an Indeterminate Brahman, a world of delusion and the identity of individual soul with Brahman. The above mentioned remarks embody the orthodox Advaita position.

Radhakrishnan does not accept that his *Mayavada* is not that of Sankara. He has diluted the rigor and the force and according to some, the logic also of *Mayavada*. He does not regard the world as absolutely illusory, nor does he admit the doctrine of the identity of the soul. He is alive to the criticism of the western world. He is too wise a thinker as to deny the value of the real world which is the place where we practise our religions (*sadhanabhoomi*).

The doctrine of Sankara's *Mayavada* is not to be identified with non-existence as it is often mistaken. The

logic of Sankara is as follows. The criterion of reality is that which exists in all times. We are not aware of the world in deep sleep. So it is not real (*nasat*). The absolutely non-existent object cannot be seen at all nor conceived, for example, sky lotus. The world in which we live and move is recognised by us. So it is *nasat*. A thing cannot be non-existent and existent. Such a position is contradictory. The world cannot be defined as *Sat* or *Asat*. It is *Anirvachaniya* i.e. not describable either as *Sat* or *Asat*.

Radhakrishnan's curiosity declares that the world is unreal but not illusory. "Unreal the world is, illusory it is not." This statement of the Professor is not appreciated by orthodox *advaitins*. The Professor knows that the dangers of the world as absolutely unreal. Bernand Shaw regards the world as significantly real, "Life is not a brief candle but a splendid torch, I have got hold of it for sometime. I want to make it burn bright before handing it over to future generations." The Professor does not even completely agree with the view that the individual soul is submerged in Brahma. He works upon the doctrine of *maya* as indicating the limitations of human understanding. Hence we cannot say that the Professor is a cent per cent orthodox *advaitin*. This does not belittle the view that he looks upon Sankara with respect.

In Calcutta, Radhakrishnan wrote the history of Indian Philosophy in two volumes. This secured for him a firm place amongst the scholars. It is a massive work in two volumes. The first volume was published in 1923, and the second in 1927. It was so planned as to include it in the library of philosophy series. The head of the publisher's firm, Stanley Unwin a distinguished publisher, was shrewd enough to see the marketability of the volume. He agreed not to a mere history of Indian Philosophy as that of Das Gupta's four volumes. It is an interpretative survey rather than a mere chronicle. Every system of Indian Philosophy is interpreted in the modern



psychological idiom with apt comparison with Western thinkers. It is not even an antiquarian account. It is intellectual history of philosophical ideas. In Radhakrishnan's account, the great thinkers do not merely belong to the past but have topical lessons for the present age. He clothed the ideas of Indian philosophy with flesh and blood. These two volumes include a chapter on the Upanishads and the *Gita*. He put the Indian Philosophy on the map of the world. The poet T.S. Eliot's comment is worth noting here. "The Indian Philosopher's subtleties make most of the philosophers look like school boys." The volume provides excellent reading and the comparisons are striking. The Professor had no time to revise it because of his exciting and well deserved success in human life when destiny and God's grace made him hop from post to post till he reached the Presidentship.

After Upanishads, the Professor turned his mind to Brahmasutras. The Brahmasutras constitute the spiritual dictionary. They are 564 in numbers. They are in the form of aphorisms--short and cryptic utterances. They are divided into four chapters. Sage Veda Vyasa is their author. With the help of the Sutras the *acharyas* have tried to systematise the passages in the Upanishads. The Brahmasutras constitute the most difficult philosophical text. All the *acharyas* have commented on it and each held the view that his commentary alone has textual fidelity and other *acharyas* interpretation of the Brahmasutras give us an introductory and readable account of the Sutras.

The Upanishadic statements interpreted in the light of Brahmasutra is solidified and condensed in the immortal *Bhagavat Gita*. The *Gita* is compared to milk got from the cow called Upanishad from the supreme cowherd called Krishna for the benefit of Arjuna. It is a fact to be noted that the Professor turned his mind to the *Gita* first and after many more years attempted the source books Upanishad and Brahmasutras. As Vice-Chancellor



of Banaras Hindu University, the Professor every Sunday lectured on the *Gita*. The *Gita* has come to stay as the great book of perennial philosophy ever to have been written. It is one book admired alike by the ancient *acharyas* and modern savant. In his brilliant introduction to the translation, the Professor describes the book as not only the book of the Hindu but a book of World Religions.

*Gita* is his pet scripture. The Professor was never tired of declaring that *Gita* religion is what we need today. He looks upon the *Gita* as the layman's Bible. Speaking about its importance, he declares that it is neither old nor new, but eternal (*Sanathana Dharma*). It is situated in the great epic *Mahabharata* in the Bhishma Parva from chapters 25 to 42 (18 chapters-700 verses). It is in the form of a dialogue between India's most fascinating two heroes--Krishna and Arjuna, the representative man, the close companion, and the chosen instrument. The doctrine was delivered not in a lonely hermitage on a mountain top but in the midst of the battle field. The armies have drawn their swords and the valiant Arjuna in a splendid chariot driven by the great charioteer Krishna, arrived in the battle field. The ambidextrous warrior, the hero of a thousand battles, who rescued several damsels in distress, saw in the battle his own teachers, friends and relatives. The sight of the relatives (*swajana*). made him panic and, his heart fainted. In an hour of duty, false compassion overtook him. The effect was so great that it manifested in psychosomatic troubles. His head reeled, his bow Gandiva slipped from his hands. He could not stand still. He told his master that he cannot fight for worldly sovereignty. So saying he slumped down on the rear part of the chariot.

Arjuna realised that he cannot function on his own efforts. He forgot for a moment in his pride that eternal companion has been the protector of his family for generations—Kunti, Draupadi, Uttara. Familiarity made him not realise the greatness of the Lord. Being a wise

man in deep anguish, fully aware of the righteousness of the cause, he sought moral devise and direction of the Lord, surrendering to him as a disciple. Then the *Gita* flowed from the lips of the Lord. It is in the form of couplets, the Lord delivered the message to Arjuna and convinced him conclusively, that it is righteous to wage a war and kill enemies of *dharma*.

The message of the *Gita*, according to Radhakrishnan, can be summarised as follows. Men must order their desires and must have faith in the Lord. Faith is a power and not a mere intellectual consent. Faith is not a power opposed to reason. It is conviction without any reservation. It is an absolute commitment and not one among many. It is this conviction that gives purpose of life. The firmness of conviction gives us fortitude to go through ordeals in the dark days of distress. It is lack of faith and conviction that debilitates us. Faith in *dharma* gives us courage.

Besides faith we need self-control. We should not allow our senses to go unbridled like wild horses. The Professor was never tired of stressing the need for self-control and mind-control in his lectures. Conviction and faith gives us mind-control and singleness of mind. Faith and self-control are the navigators compass that help us sail through wild winds and raging storms. The *Gita* insists on *Samyama*—to control.

Arjuna was posing something different from what he was really. He did not know the great truth that no one can denature oneself or transgress his genetic unchanging qualities of his *swarupa*. The Lord tells him, "Your resolve not to fight is play acting. Your nature as Kshatriya will compel you to act."

The Lord teaches the doctrine of *Karma yoga* which is opposed to "Do Nothingism." Life is coexisting with activities. Act we must. There is no freedom from action but only freedom in action. *Karma yoga* is not reflex

activity, nor self-indulgence, nor repression. It is a goal-directed, controlled activity in accordance with our *swadharma* and *swabhava*. The acts do bind us only if we have selfish motives. If we surrender them to the Lord the very acts become levers for bondage.

Gautami, a bereaved lady who had lost her only son, was weeping at her home with the corpse before her. Somebody told her that the master was around there. She took her son, weeping piteously and asked the master to wake him up. The master as a supreme logician asked her to get a few mustard seeds from the house where no death had occurred. The mother went round and round and found no house where no one had died. When Gautami returned she was convinced of the universe of death. I recommend to all students of philosophy to read and re-read the Professor's lecture on Buddha in British Academy. The rational temperament on Buddha appealed to one and all. In his first volume of Indian Philosophy, the Professor has exposed 400 pages for the explanation of Gautama the Buddha. When the Professor sent the volume to Bertrand Russel, Russel said, "If I were in India, I would have been a Buddhist."

The other systems of philosophy are dealt with not in proportionate length. His account of Ramanuja and Madhva requires revision and a better presentation which the Professor would have done, if he had revised it.



## Concept of Religion

Radhakrishnan's contribution to the field of religion is profound. Religion to him was based on firm and absolute commitment. Religion implied ethical life. A man may subscribe to all the dogmas of a creed and perform all necessary genuflection before the image of God and may also experience emotions but if he is not honest, if he has no fellow feeling, his religion is a sham. Religion is based on the experience of God. It has two sides to it, the individual and the social. The Professor is of the opinion that all the existing religions are not perfect though they were excellent in parts. Each had a defect. The Semitic religions Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Zoroastrianism subscribed to the creed of unipersonal manifestation of God. Each of them held that their conception of Vishnu, Shiva, Christ, Allah was final. These thoughts when asserted they were absolutely right and others entirely wrong. These religions in the opinion of the others were responsible for communalism. Radhakrishnan envisages a religion which is rational answering the demands of logic and warmly gives the needs of humanity. He defined religion as *Satyam*. Truth giving peace of mind.

In his inaugural address at the Oxford University he held the view that real religion is yet to be born. The title of the lecture was "The world's unborn soul". He has many important books on the subject. Chief among them are *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, *A collection of Oxford Lectures*, *Religions East and West*, *Birtty Memorial Lectures (USA)*, *Recovery of Faith*, *Religions and Society (Kamala Lectures)* and his last work *Religion and the Changing World*.

The Professor was aware of the present condition of human mind. He was well aware of the advance of science and technology, psychiatry, endocrinology and other sciences. Secular minded scientists, natural minded philosophers, left wing politicians are all united in debunking religion and discrediting tradition. They hold that religion has weakened the mind of man and taken away the initiative from him. They describe man as an assembled machine, ready to run. They hold that the concept of God invoking soul salvation and concept of dharma are the results of disordered minds coupled with intemperate imagination, seeding instant fulfilment, rejecting the present on hand and flying into a future which never exists. With this faith, they live and make use of all scientific technique and do not fill their soul with impossible longings.

The Professor from his early days has laid great stress on the importance for man's need for religion. From his early pamphlets to his last work, *Religion and the Changing World*, he has been assiduously and persistently trying to convince the doubting world the essential need of religion for man. Man without God is no man at all. The Professor in many of his lectures has examined the difficulties of belief. He has repeatedly pointed out the enemy of religion is dogmatism. Dogmatism is the foundation-stone of the fundamentalists in religion. They hold the view that the existence of God can be revealed but cannot be proved along with the concept of the soul, universe and immortality. Forty of the Gifford lectures in Edinburgh, have laboured in establishing the fundamentals of religion, existence of God and other categories through the help of reason. The present day philosophical system, prominent among them, logical positivism and existentialism do not believe in unverified truth. They confine verification only to human experience. As against all this, in his Herbert lectures, and in his book on *Recovery of Faith* and other works; he pleads for the existence of God and man's



association with Him as essential for sane and safe living and a healthy society. This psychological argument which the Professor puts again and again in several lectures is highly moving and very nearly convincing us. With touching emotions he writes, "There are occasions in human life when with our faltering knowledge, fallible intellect, uncertain changing circumstances, and when our props give way and surface support slips, fortune fails and our near and dear depart, and health crumbles, we look upon help to the Lord." This is not only in the experience of all human beings who are reflective, it is asserted by the long line of devotees in the east and the west. William James asserts "Man's extremity is God's opportunity." Lord Krishna in the *Gita* makes the most unenviable promise that "he who surrenders to Me without any reservation I look after such men's early prosperity and heavenly welfare." The Lord is not merely content by making this promise. He asks Arjuna also to attest to the truth of it. Tell the world that my devotees will never come to grief. In the illustrious epic *Ramayana*, after a period of long suffering, Sita exclaims and Bharata affirms that he who lives a long life and has faith never comes to grief.

Faith is a power and a force. It is generated through knowledge. Lord Krishna in the *Gita* affirms that he who has faith and love obtains knowledge. Once he is in possession of the right knowledge of the object, he controls the wavered distraction of the senses and obtains, singleness of mind in the form of devotion to the Lord.

Lord does not leave the negative of this position unstated. He who is ignorant of this truth and eternally doubts is lost to happiness and salvation. The dynamics of faith is the corner-stone of religion. The Professor profusely quotes from the Bible off and on. Christ holds the view that faith can move mountains. Atheists are men of no faith. This faith is generated by an accurate knowledge of the Lord's greatness especially in three



aspects. His greatness (*Mahatmya*), accessibility (*Saulabhya*) and tender compassion (*Sousheelya*) are ever there. It is not for the first time that Christ equated Lord with Love. It is the central doctrine of vedanta, theism and Bhakti cult.

Professor was not slow to see the present day aberration of devotion. Clever men all over the world can turn devotion into commercial racket. They may preach a cult, spread devotion and magnify the goodness and omnipotence of the Lord and please the populace at large. They may feign religious emotions, dance all the day, hold forth attractive doctrines such as that no man is capable of doing so much sin that God cannot excuse. Common folk without sufficient education and reflective mind fall a prey to merely to take the name of the Lord to be saved not bother how they live. The *Vishnu Purana* and *Bhagavata* are aware of such people who take the name of the Lord and bid good bye to their responsibility and *swadharma*. They are real enemies of God. As God is the very form of righteousness. *Katopanishad* declares, which the Professor quotes often, that there is no salvation for one who has no compassion, no peace of mind. Conduct and sense of duty, ceremonial purity and ethical excellence are absolutely necessary. Generally men live as they like, seeking pleasure.

The Upanishads compare the senses to horses, human beings to the rider in a chariot. The soul rides in the chariot, the chariot is the mind and the senses are the horses. The rider must know how to ride the chariot. He must not kill the horses. In that case he will never reach the destination, nor should he allow the horses to run wherever they like. A current Tamil proverb says, "The horses will dig a pit and bury the rider." The rider must know when to hold back and when to release. He must be a skilled rider. Human body is the chariot. Human life is a mixture of good and evil. It is neutral in itself. The use

to which we put it determines the end. Throughout his life and lectures in different places, Radhakrishnan highlighted self-control and mind-control. No excellences can be achieved without concentration. It is difficult to control the mind. The Lord in reply, like a good teacher, admits the difficulty broadly but scientifically and systematically describes how to overcome it. The sixth chapter of the *Bhagavat Gita* is on the subject of self-control. One should have an accurate knowledge of the values he entertains and their priorities. He must know to put the first thing in the first place, reading the scriptures under the competent Guru who is learned and has faith in what he teaches. The student's approach must not merely be academic. He must have faith in the Guru and his competence. He must resort to him without reservation. At the top of all this he must have belief in values and reflective knowledge of values and disvalues. The knowledge of faith will make him detest the values.

The theoretical knowledge of disvalue is only the first step. It need not make one reject them. Duryodhana in India and St. Paul in the Christian world have attested this truth, namely to know a thing is not do it. There is discrepancy between one's knowledge and action. Knowledge in action is wisdom. We know the good. We are not able to do it. We know the evil but are not able to desist from it. But we can keep down the evil and do the correct thing. We can try but we know from human history that mightiest men have failed. Yudishtra could not resist gambling so also Nala the great emperor, Visvamitra could not overcome lust. The story of all of us is not different. Like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, we are too in a combination of bad and good. Even with mighty self effort in the complete knowledge of the evil we always are not sure to succeed. Every act we do despite some impressions in our mind. These impressions are powerful forces. They accumulate, then try to group into a force ever ready for action. They grow into habits. Habits are



easy to form and hard to break. Whenever any individual acts there is a tendency for him to be guided by the force of the activities. They are called *samskaras*. It is a difficult task to control the *samskara*. It is almost next to impossible. We sow a habit and reap a character. Character is destiny.

The central problem of morality is man's freedom. Freedom of will distinguishes man from the animal world. The opponents of Indian Philosophy and Hinduism have directed their attack on two important doctrines. The doctrine of *maya* and doctrine of *Karma*. The metaphysical doctrine of *maya* has been criticised by theistic scholars like Ramanuja, Madhva, Vallabha and Chaitanya and also in a way by Radhakrishnan. Indian Philosophy is described as determinist and not allowing man his freedom. If man has no freedom of will there is no point punishing him for his sins and rewarding him for his good activities. The doctrine of *Karma* is not mechanist determinism. It is self determination. I am responsible for my acts. No dark destiny or fortune guides it. Shakespeare puts it bluntly in the words of Brutus "The fault is in us and not in our stars." The *samskaras* and impressions are there. The Professor very eloquently pleads for the reconciliation of the omnipotence of the Lord and freedom of human being. The Professor gives a very homely example in describing the efficacy of *karma*. He compares life to a game of cards. We have no choice, once we are in possession of the cards. It is left to us to playing the game from which results our loss or gain. *Karma* is self determination. We are not absolutely independent. In this Rosseau is wrong. Man carries his part impression which has terrible force which determines the drive and the direction of the action. Human freedom is there but with limits. The history of human civilisation shows the victory man can achieve against evils. We have rejected slavery and made untouchability a crime and given women equal rights.



These are all expressions of human freedom. Man is not a robot, nor society a field of turnips.

To act with wisdom and reflection, self-control, self-knowledge and self-reverence. One must read the scriptures to find the do's and don't's. Association counts. Atmosphere is more than a creed. Company of good men makes us correct mean motives and evil desires. The ego and the ideals you see inspire us. In fact the purpose of *Avatara* is not to destroy evil mind and protect good but furnish men the way to right living. There is no better example than Sri Ramachandra. A bifocal approach furnishes us the example of an ideal monarch, and an ideal son, husband and brother. In no eventuality defined or undefined he deviate from Dharma or self-control. He did not despise pleasures of life. He had them in ample measure, conjugal felicity, pleasant company he had the Sita.

The Hindu view of life does not deny life or its pleasures. It does not want to go about in a barbarian way. The Hindu view of life is sensitive to the different demands of man's life. It asks men and women go through defined stages. We have before us the grand four fold scheme of *varnas* or *ashrams*, caste or *ashrams*.

The Christian missionaries and critics of Hinduism hold the view that when the Hindu religion is ascetic, life is denied of worldly pleasures. This criticism is effectively met by the Professor Radhakrishnan. Hindu classification of caste is mentioned from Rigveda. The four classes Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vysya and Sudra were ordained by the God. The criterion that divides one from the other is *Guna* and *Karma* their nature and their activities. There is no reference here to birth. But the difficulty is there, as to how we can identify the individual's varna. Hence the average Hindu applied the mechanical criterion that one born to Brahmin is a Brahmin and so on. We cannot absolutely overrule this

concept for the simple reason birth is not an accident. My birth in a particular family, in a particular class and status depends upon my previous *Karma*. The life of the individual is not chastic. It is not left to chance. There is a governance of the Lord, not only of the souls, and the physical order but also the moral order. The alarming inequalities in human life and monstrous contrasts have to be accounted for. If we don't do this we will come to live in chance universe. In a chance universe there is no guarantee that our pursuits of value will give us rewards. So it is very difficult to override and declare that caste is not absolutely based on birth.

The Professor in his earlier works, with a tact and talent of his own, was soft pedalling on his remarks on caste system. For sometime he, like other thinkers, believed the caste system to be based on vocation. The Brahmin was on the top and the system was pyramidal. The concept is federal. All may not be equal but they are necessary. Civilisation is a co-operative adventure. Basing the caste system on vocation is no longer valid because the excessive desire for comfort in modern life made the Brahmin go to the market and choose such vocation which is highly paying. The displacements and contrasts adopted by different *varnas* are no longer a safe guide for classification. For sometime Radhakrishnan was playing with this idea. Later, after his 60s, in lectures on Religion and Society and his last work *Religion in the Changing World*, he has decidely changed his opinion that caste system is outmoded and unhelpful classification. Untouchability is a crime outlined in the Constitution. Gandhiji lamented that there is no use abolishing untouchability in statue and while it is alive in society. Men must grow in their spiritual feeling and realise that each has got a style of life which is genetic and unalterable and it is healthy to grow according to his style of life. Hence there is no use trying to be another or adopt



a way of life leaving our style of life. The author of the *Gita* is insistent on the concept of *Swadharma*.

Life is a gift of nature and God to us. Life on earth as human being with intelligence and reflective power is a gift of wisdom. It is a revolutionary process. One cannot realise the goal of life, suddenly in an incident, like the life of plant it evolves. Men grow not in an isolated fashion but among other men.

The Hindu thinkers have divided life into four clear marked stages, the first is *Brahmacharya*—student life. Roughly this period covers the first 16 years of one's life. One has to devote this period as to learn the lessons of life, it is mechanism, it is art and science. What we will do in our later life is conditioned and determined by what we do in our earlier life. As is the child so is the father. It is a common truth that men who do not spend their early life in study pay for it heavily in their later life. The *Brahmachari* spends all his life under a competent Guru to learn different arts and sciences. This is a precious period in one's life. Going to the Guru to learn the art of life is not a formality. It is a must according to psychology. Before the boy, the teacher has to place the great ideals of moral life, train his limbs, mind and spirit. The desires of the human mind are naturally awakened by their alluring presentation. Hence the necessity for selective reading, securing of singleness of mind, concentration, overcoming distractions from trivialities of life. The love of the spiritual ideal, transcending all other lesser values results from the knowledge and faith in the great values. It is like the ripening of the fruit. Renunciation is not difficult when you catch hold of something superior. *Vairagya* is *Vishesha raaga* in God. It is intense love. Once you love and worship an ideal which is all consuming, other values fall apart. *Vairagya* is transvaluation of values. So it is not as difficult as we imagine. Renunciation is to have firm faith in higher value. Nor is Hindu view of life ascetic. One of



the characteristic features of Hindu Sociology is that the human being must have a *Varna* and an *ashrama*.

The next is *Grihastha*. After obtaining the permission of the Guru, the human being settles down to a householder's life. The householder's life is described as the most important ashram. Manu and others showed their unstinted praise on it. Hinduism does not ask to leave your home to go to mountain top or monasteries, nor does it ask you to give up the necessary and healthy pleasures of life and charms of existence. To the Hindu all days are "Ekadasies" or "Shivaratries". The Hindu knows too well the findings of the psychologist Freud that suppression leads to surprising outlets and excess is the gateway to wisdom. This doctrine is countered by the doctrine of moderation. If suppression leads to surprising outlets, over indulgence leads to mental troubles. The path of wisdom is moderation. The *Gita* asks us to be moderate in our food habits and temperate in our sleep habits. Do not run to excess. Moderation is not a policy with the Hindu but is the article of Faith. The householder's (*Grihashthashrama*) life is training ground for self-control and mind-control. He must feed the *Sanyasin* and the student. Marriage is a sacrament and is not a social arrangement. The promise the bridegroom gives of righteousness (*Sahadharmacharini*). Children are a necessity in the Hindu ethics. The art of life is learnt in the *Grihashthashrama*.

One's life is not complete without contemplation and pursuit of the spiritual idea. The *Vanaprastha*, the third stage is most enjoyable life. There is a contemplative life, when one lives in a distant village far from the maddening crowd with his wife when mutual education takes place. Then comes a stage in human life that he has enough of life. This is the stage of *Sanyasa*. This is not, as mistaken by the rationalists, a life of indolence where one is determined to live on others without doing anything.

The *sanyasin* is 24 hour servant of God. He is the Mt. Everest in the art of spiritual mountaineering. The *Sanyasin* lives for others. He has single minded devotion of God. He owes nothing and must help others to grow in spiritual height.

It is not necessary for one to wear yellow robes and to have shaven heads to become a *sanyasin*. It is a psychological state of mind. The *sanyasin* has established in his person perfect accord between his word, deed and action. Such men are God's men. Their existence sanctifies our world. They are the salt of the earth which keep our society disinfected. But for their speaking light, the world will be a dark place. Uddhava in the *Baghavata* opines that "Sacred rivers purify us by our bath in them after sometime, worship of idols secure us. But sight of vision of saints instantaneously purifies us."

Kalidasa, the natural poet of India, describes the ideal family of the Raghus observing scrupulously the behest of the *ashrama* ideal. "In their boyhood they read; they cultivate education; in their youth they enjoy sensual pleasures; in their old age they live like sages and in the fourth stage by contemplation they reach the Lord."

The *ashrama* ideal is highly psychological and conducive to spiritual height and social welfare. Spiritual life cannot be attained by a sudden hopping. It is psychologically planned and graded. Training in human life must satisfy the body, the mind and the spirit. Otherwise we become truncated individuals and monsters. The Hindu scheme of *ashrams* is a vital contribution to human sociology. What should man pursue? What are the human ideals? Hindu thinkers have erected four human ideals for the pursuit of human ideals and salvation. They are wealth, possession, desire, Dharma—righteousness and *Moksha*—salvation. The order in which they are put is *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kama* and *Moksha*. They are *purusharthas* because man has to pursue them with the knowledge of



their values and human effort. In the Hindu ritualistic ceremony, in the *sankalpa*, everyone says that all his acts are for securing the four *purusharthas*.

A look at the four *purusharthas*, two of them are means values and other two are end values. To live a dignified life, one must have enough competence to live his life without wants. Poverty makes virtues impractical. Money and wealth are exemplary factors necessary for independent life. A Sanskrit proverb declares that the *mahapathakas* are not traditional five but six, the sixth one being *daridra*—poverty. We have seen in human life he who is at the receiving end is at a disadvantage. Even in friendship where there is unequal combination, the disadvantage is to the weaker one. Disproportionate friendship terminates in disgust. Thought money and wealth are important factors which helps us in the art of living, they should not be earned by foul means by troubling or duping others. They must be earned by hard work.

The second value is desire. *Kama* is not merely sexual lust. All desires imply *kama*. Even the desire for *Moksha* is also a desire. An individual's psychological make-up constitutes desires. Desires, distract and run in different ways. They have to be integrated and regulated. If unregulated, they lead to mental disease and physical ailment. A popular verse in Sanskrit sums up the issue "He who is a slave of desires is slave of the entire world." He who enslaves desires has the whole world at his command. Desires can be controlled and integrated by regulating them with *dharma*. *Dharma* is the chief instrumental value. It is *dharma* that sustains society. Dr. Radha Krishnan in his address to the Constituent Assembly made the wise observation, "No country is governed by army or legislatures. It is *dharma* that sustains us. The world of value is sustained by *dharma*. The root meaning of *dharma* is that which sustains society."



The development of an individual is well sustained by ordering our desires according to *dharma*. All the *Dharmasastras* are codes of morality. They uphold *dharma*. Every individual to whatever caste he may belong, has to practise two virtues *satya* and *dharma*. They conduce to human growth and lead to salvation. The four-fold scheme *Chaturanga–Dharma, Artha, Kama* and *Moksha*—has two values; *Arth* and *Kama* enclosed by *Dharma* and *Moksha*.

The concept of *dharma* according to traditional morality have been clearly explained in the *Smrithis*. They hold that the morality is absolute. It is unchanging and eternal. What is *dharma* in the *Kritha Yug* is also so in *Kali Yug*. Dr. Radhakrishnan, like all modern reformers, believed and supplied the doctrine *dharmaparivarthana*. Society has growth and change. This change is reflected in the ideal of *dharma*. What is *dharma* to one is *adharma* to another. The Professor in his lectures on *dharma* believed in mutability of *dharma* and its change. He said that morality is not absolute in the sense that it does not change. But it is absolute in the sense that one's *dharma* is ordained for one. Men, have placed the economic ideal and pleasant existence as their goals. *Dharma* has been changing from time to time, place to place and person to person is irrefutable. The veteran scholar Maha Mahopadhyaya B.V. Rane in his monumental four volume work on *dharmasastras* has accidentally argued the case for the change in *dharma*. Human life is a growing phenomenon. Life cannot be encased in a prison. Environmental changes are necessary. Radhakrishnan in all his lectures pleaded for social reforms and rights of women for equal opportunities in the office of the State and governance of the country. The constitution provides it.

The orthodox answer to that *dharmaparivarthana* has been provided in the scheme of *dharma*. The code of conduct of men in *Kaliyuga* is not the same as in

Krithayuga. *Stridharma* is not *purusha dharma*. There is difference between *apathdharma* and *sadharanadharmā*. Orthodox feel that there is no necessity specially declared in the changing nature of *dharma*. Like all modern reformers Dr. Radhakrishnan had been insistent on scheme of reforms.

The fourth *purushartha* is *moksha*. *Moksha* is a master word in Indian philosophy. It is described as a State of existence where men are free from ignorance and sorrow. Men realise their full potentially and get rid of all their limitations in *moksha*. *Moksha* is the goal of vedanta. In all the schools we find two ideal distinctions in the concept of *moksha*. One is the *advaitic* notion of individual establishing identity with Brahman. The other is becoming an enlightened devotee of God free from impurity and the absence of relevance of birth and death and a state of enlightenment where there is no sorrow. Radhakrishnan described the concept of *moksha* in a wonderful way in several of his books. The Professor further added that men who attain *moksha* do not remain idle but are born in society and teach the gospel to the men in sorrow and lead them to salvation. In my reading of ethical treatises I do not find any better ethic than *Ramayana*. Sri Ramachandra and other characters in the epic uphold the value of truth. They are truth bound and are willing to die for it. The Professor used to say Ramachandra wanted to prove his father truthful, hence he went into exile for fourteen years. Bharata said that he would not wait a day later than the period of exile of Rama's return failing that he means his death. Sita told Hanuman that she would not live more than a month if Rama could not take her. Ramachandra kept his contract with Sugriva and Vibhishana. Throughout the epic truth and integrity are not just described but are enacted. In social philosophy, Dr. Radhakrishnan was indeed a great reformer.



## On the Meeting of Religions

**D**r. Radhakrishnan was of the opinion that to be human one has to be religious. Religion is not something inconvenient for human life. It does not hinder the progress of men. In his Oxford lectures on 'Eastern religion and Western thoughts' he holds the view that Hinduism has the correct attitude and can be accepted as universal religion. This declaration does not mean that Hinduism has to be accepted as it is. The Professor never supported the present day Hinduism as it is. He held the view that Hinduism is not a movement, not a position, a process not a result, a growing tradition and not a fixed revelation. Radhakrishnan upheld the Hinduism of Upanishads and the *Gita*. He was alive to the defects of Hinduism as in practice. He wanted Hinduism to be influenced by world thought. He said that neither untouchability nor the ill-treatment of women, nor the dogmatism in upholding the exclusive faith in an unipersonal manifestation of God relates to Hindu religion.

The religion we need, according to Radhakrishnan, must be ethically perfect. Morality is rooted in religion. Morality is not religion but necessary for it. Religion comprises humanism but humanism is not solely religion. Religion gives the basis for humanism. All the human disciplines have their rightful place in shaping a man: art and aesthetics save man from ugliness, philosophy and religion from boredom, and metaphysics from the defects of slipshod talk. Science gives us practical disciplines to overcome natural forces and threat of physical forces.



Politics enables us to plan society and live sane and safe life. Ethics above all weans us from unprincipled and unregulated life. Dr. Radhakrishnan was for integration of all disciplines. To him religion was not a mere ritual or idol worship. It made man human.

Religion is experience. Faith is total, organic and integral to man. It is a complete commitment, not a passive national reaction. One cannot be religious by proxy. Each must bear the cross and crucify his ego for the light in him to shine. There is no path to God except through humility and service to humanity. Religion does not surrender the critical attitude. There is no point in refusing to be critical about religion when we accept its role in other disciplines. Uncritical acceptance keeps our faith at kindergarden level. The religious quest is a struggle. You have to slog your mind, smelter all along.

The quest gives meaning of personal existence and significance of life. In short, religion assumes the three questions that Kant asks:

What can we know?

What may we hope for?

What do we do?

It is only men who have known reflective turn of mind that will abandon the quest. Such men do not accept any transemperical category. The typical rationalistic atheist observes after the manner of Bertrand Russel.

I do not think that life in general has any purpose. It just happens. Some parts are organised and rest are cinders. But individual human being has a purpose. They cannot of course be certain of achieving the results at which they aim. Religion saps the individual's initiative and makes him lose the self-confidence. The Professor in several of his lectures accounts for the unbelief and lack of faith of modern man. The one 'X' factor that makes man deny God is his astonishing achievement in science

and technology. Dr. Radhakrishnan again and again, has drawn attention to the limitations of science and its inability to measure values. Rationalism makes dreadful miscalculations and has no instrument to study the undetectable element in nature. "Human values like friendship and love, enjoyment of works of art cannot be discussed by science. More goes into the paintings of the celebrated masters than the canvas and the pigment. Celebrated musical compositions are not the result of mere differences in sound and wavelength. The great discoveries in science and works of mathematical genius are results of inspiration and not logical reasoning. Religious experience is a leap." Kierkegaard writes: "In religious faith there comes a point where it is important to understand that one cannot understand truth further. The nature of religious experience baffles the rationalist and educates him into the humility of the reality of his finitude. He cannot have a dogmatic finality of religious truth. We know the experience of God so well that we are not able to explain it. Religion must not be a process of cold scrutiny but must be a loving commitment. Man is not all knowing. There are many things which he cannot know...Even with things he knows very little. All know mighty little." Our exercise in analysis and sharpened intellect and mighty scientific instrument is humorously criticised by Gerald Head. "Man is like a sandmartin driver by instinct to ditch down and look sufficiently deep with his keen intellect. So that at the depth he can go on to master those exercise whereby he might become an actual experiment and manifestation of the good, the true and the beautiful. But he finds this critical boring faculty cannot be stopped and the constructive creature, integral power is never let to come to play. He probes no better than the sand-martin which exhausts on constructive impulse to drill after several attempts."

"The high and the best may run by desire and not by feet, for he may be loved and not throughout by love, he



may be gotten and holden by thought never." The *Gita* affirms the religious experience. Radhakrishnan makes use of this to criticise unipersonal manifestations of God. He quotes the *Gita* "The Lord's compassion not only welcomes all faiths as roads to His abode and also holds out that he manifests to the aspirant in the way he approaches."

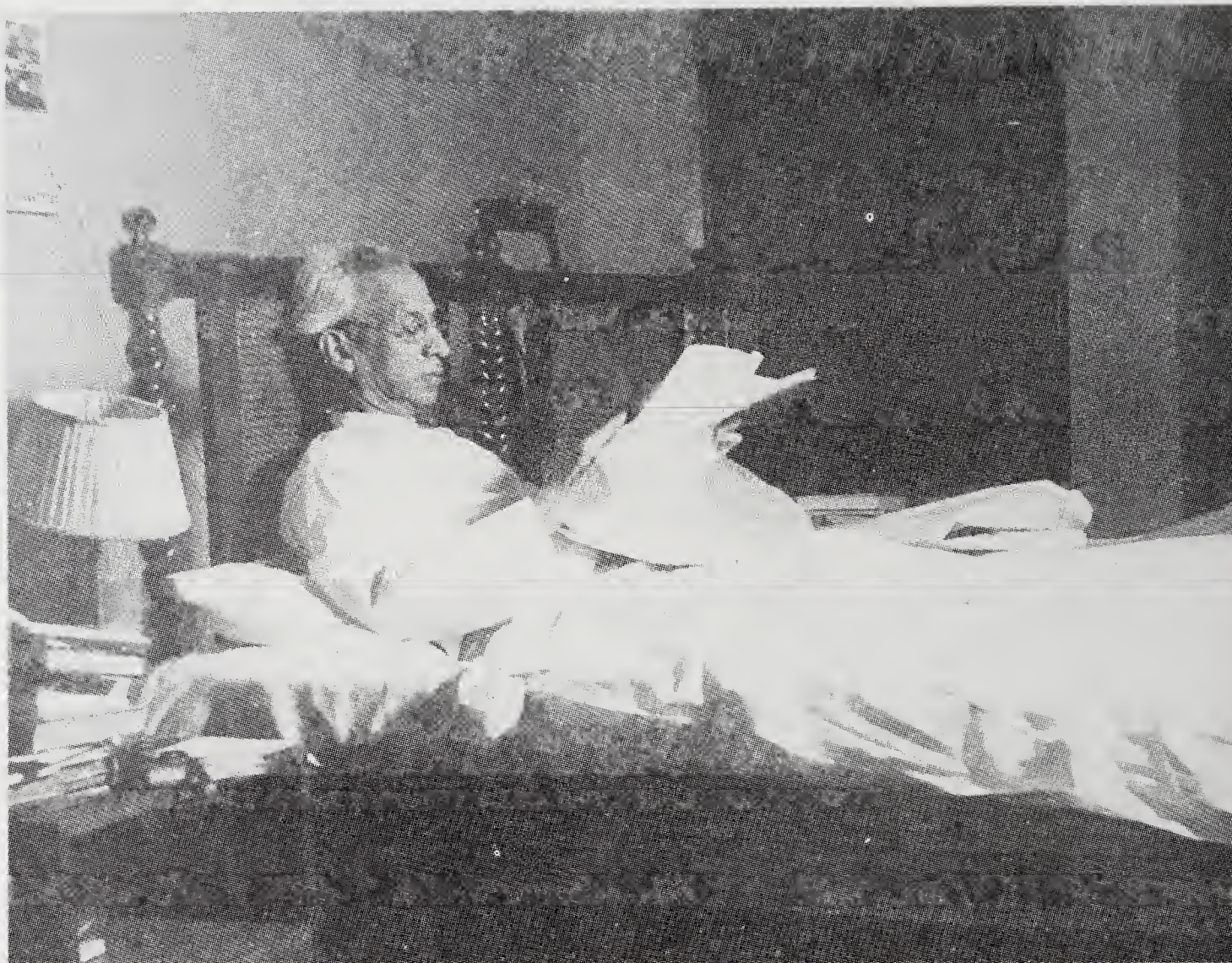
The Professor slogged his mind all through in life to establish the fact, the fellowship of faith. The one great truth he held is expressed differently by different religions. It is similar like the six blind men describing the elephant. One held the legs and described it as a pillar, another the ears and described as fans and so on. Intellect fumbles, intuition gives us certainty. Radhakrishnan describes his method to read other religions with rare insights. He quotes Wilfred Cartfield: "The traditional forum of Western Scholarship in the study of other man's religions was that of an impersonal presentation. The first great innovation in the present time, is the personalisation of the faith we examine and read. The observer must become personally involved, so that the situation is one of we talking about. The next step in the dialogue is where we talk to you. It is listening in mutually which overcomes you and me and becomes we are all talking with each other."

Religion is total commitment. It is new birth. It is bringing our all into participation. It is useless and lazy to say and stay put that all initiative is with the Lord. This type of total surrender must be backed by necessary practice. We should not surrender our anaemic self to the Lord. We should do our best and leave the rest to Him. Religion in the above sense is fundamental to man. One cannot be indifferent or neutral to it. Everyone of us has faith. It is faith in power, women and wealth. One can never be neutral. There are three stages in the knowledge of men. The first stage merely observes and enjoys the







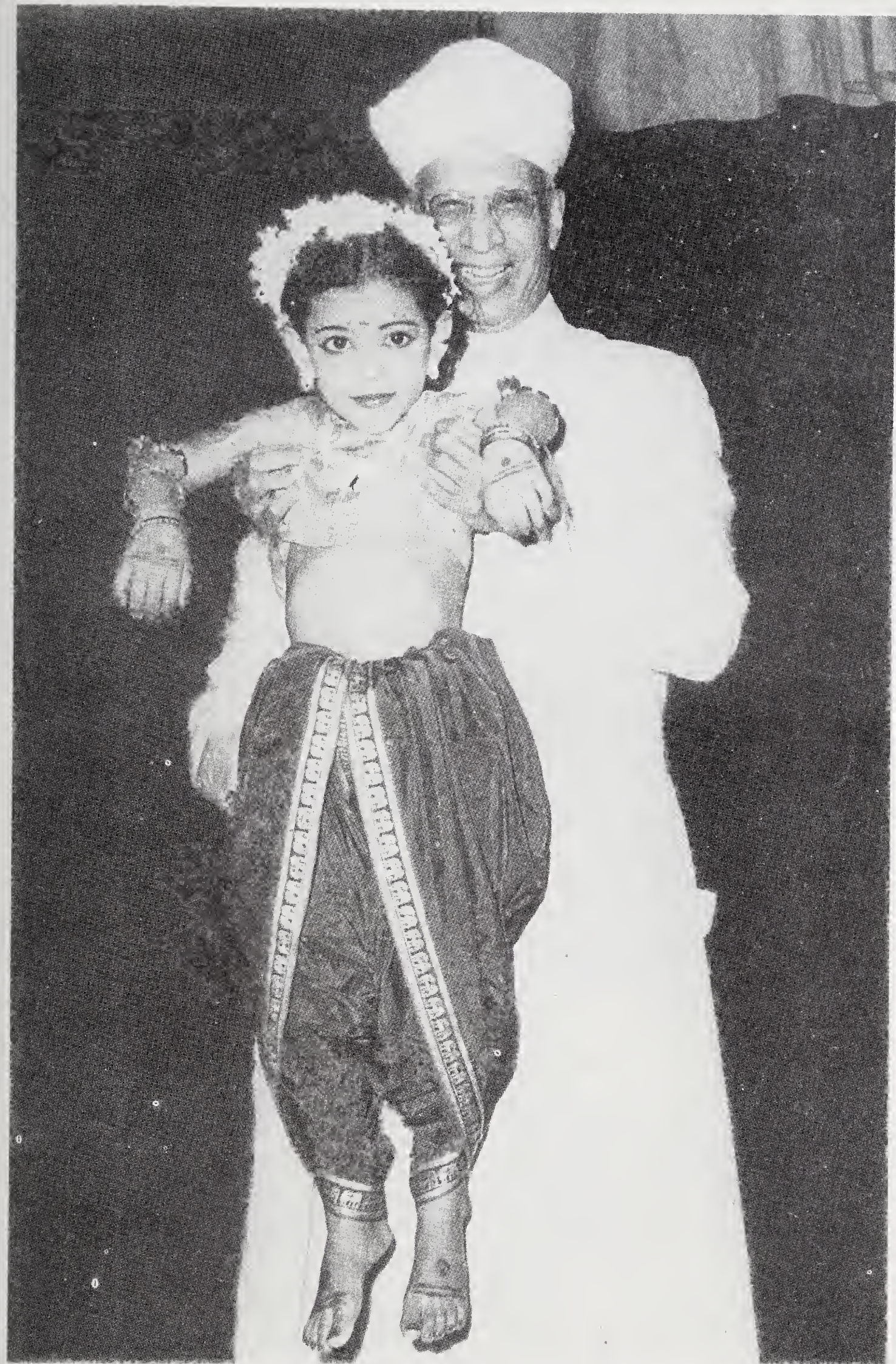


A little rest after a tiring day



With Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru





Greeting a child artist Madhavi who won a gold medal in International Dance Competition for children held in New Delhi, September 1955.





At a public meeting





At the inauguration of the Science Congress 21 January, 1959



Talking to a group of visitors



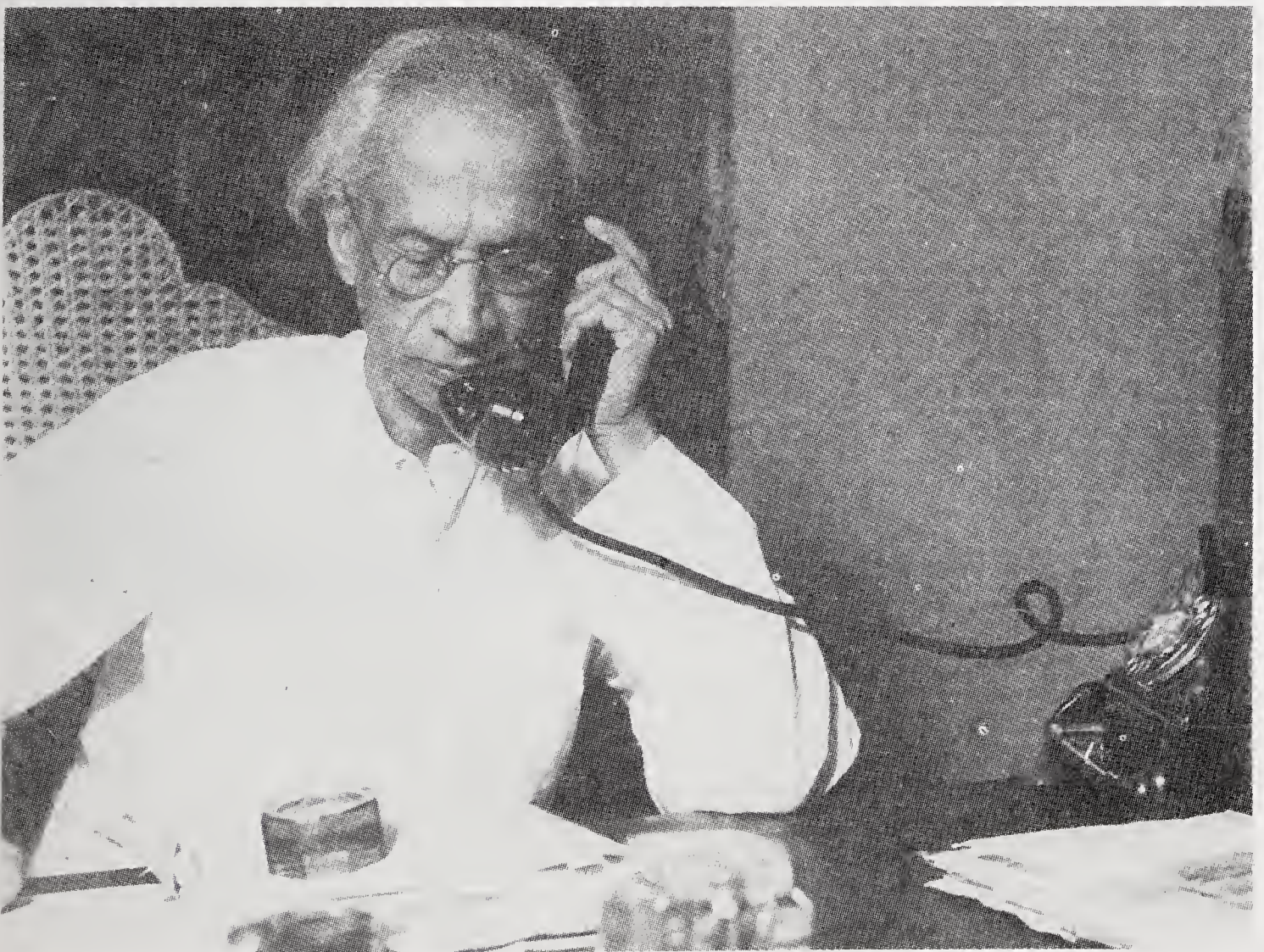


Broadcast to the nation on the eve of Independence Day,  
15 August, 1965





With His Excellency Mr. Hubert H. Humphrey, Vice-President of U.S.A. when the latter called on him in New Delhi, 16 February, 1966



Work is worship





The Prime Minister Shrimati Indira Gandhi calls on Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, former President of India at his residence at Mylapore, Madras, 23 August, 1967



objects of life- aesthetic stage. The second stage of choice- one becomes responsible participant in the exercise of preferences and rejection. This is the ethical stage. The third stage is the faith stage. It is a unique commitment. Kierkegaard observes "Faith is not a form of rational knowledge but is an existential leaps urged upwards by the full passion of the soul for its salvation, a salvation that comes not from culture, nature or reason but from the transcendent God alone."

The place of grace is very important in religion. Religion is something that comes from very fact of one being human. It is a vertical upward movement. Religion is a process of transevaluation. If one is not deeply reflective and aware of the transient nature of human and material values, he cannot find God. Maithreyi, the celebrated wife of Yagnavalkya has no use for fiscal inheritance from her sage like husband. When he proposes to make over what he has when he takes *sanyasa*, she asks him the pertinent question, "What is the use of the inheritance? It's limited use, it will help us live in ease with comfort and sense bound existence." She further declares that it cannot give plenary experience and that she has no use for the affluence before her. The spiritual instruction cannot be had by self study or intellectual probing. It has to be at the hands of an illumined guru.

Dr. Radhakrishnan was never tired of declaring the triadic *sadhana* for *moksha*. In Hindu thought there is no broadcasting of truth. He who digs gets gold. No cost should be counted in pursuit of *moksha*. The function religion discharges is unique. It has no substitute. It affirms that death is not the end of man. With poet Donne they say "Death thou art dead." In the state of *moksha* there is no sorrow or jealousy. It is one unending joy.

The Professor feels that there is growing recognition that mankind stems from one origin that has figured out



in several forms. It is striving towards reconciliation of that which appears as diverse. The unity in the faith is increasingly disclosed by the large area of agreement between the different religions in their essentials. There is no use pounding the husk leaving the grain. The professor tries his best through his eloquence and knowledge to reconcile the theistic and absolute system of vedanta. He subordinates the theistic school sometimes, which the tradition will not accept. He makes use of the *Gita* teaching as the proponent of universal religion.

The fundamentals of all religion are one at heart. The one reality is described differently according to their inclination and equipment. What we need, the Professor says, is fellowship of faith--not fight between them. The Professor is very fond of the reconciliation of different religions. He calls for a renewed faith in morality and devotion to God. He looks forward to the age when the new religion will emerge. The religion he pleads for is universal and answers to the logical needs of humanity and its need for peace.

Dr. Radhakrishnan feels that genuine Hinduism and Indian culture are not exclusively of one type. He does not subscribe to the view that Hinduism is not at all influenced by other thoughts. He believes that Indian culture is composite and not unitary. Buddhism has influenced Hinduism, likewise Jainism and Christianity. The word *Sanatana Dharma* means, not an unchanging religion. But the fundamental truths of religion are spelt out in different ways in different ages. The reality is differently spelt. The Buddhists describe it as *Nirvana*, the Saivites as Siva, the Vaishnavaites as Vishnu, Saktas as Sakthi. The reality is one, its photographs are many. The Professor quotes man passages as Vivekananda did in the world parliament, that religions are many but the truth is one. He also holds the view that reality is so stupendously great that no single description can describe it. The

Professor's bias to a modified form of advaita is visible in all his descriptions of multipersonal manifestation of God.

In the art of God realisation, Dr. Radhakrishnan combines the theistic disciple and the absolutic idea of identity of individual soul with Brahman. He pleads for tolerance and multiplicity of approach to secure salvation. Men and women are differently made, their aspirations are manifold, their defects are limitless and differentiated. Each necessarily feels a state of existence where he is not satisfied with what he has. He looks before and after and pines for what is not. Radhakrishnan's description of *Bhakti*, devotion to the Lord is highly moving and the pleasantest aspects of reading is in his works. He points out like all theist Christian and Hindu that man without God is no man at all. There is nothing in man that is not a giving of God. He has endowed the human being with a body fitted with senses. The individual is able to know the world of colour and sound through the instruments of senses. The body and the human birth is the instrument to reach God. One must not misappropriate them for self indulgence. In one of his lectures the Professor enumerates the gifts God has given us like sleep after fatigue. He is careful in describing the role of religion and not equating it with escapism or do nothingism. One cannot sit still with folded hands asking the Lord to do everything for him. Religion is a force and instrument which makes men act and do their best and leave the rest to God. Let us not forget that Arjuna fought the battle and not Krishna. Essence of religion is courage and active moral life.

What can we do with the *Gita* except sing, act and live by doctrine of *Karmayoga*. The constant refrain of the *Gita* is, do not be lazy and indolent. Fight the evil with all your might. Don't shirk from doing your duty. Do not be afraid. While you act and fight think of God. Acts as such do not bind us. When we act with personal motive for



individual gains we are likely to transgress the behest of *dharma*. If we offer all our acts to the Lord and not feel that we are entitled to the results of the act we do, we are mistaken.

*Nishkama Karma Yoga* makes us not deflect from right method. Trust and faith in God gives us fortitude. The clarion call of the *Gita* is—Act we must there is no other choice.

When Dr. Radhakrishnan was asked what we should do with the *Gita* he came the answer— “Get back to the *Gita*, read it slowly, persistently, prayerfully chapter by chapter. Its contents will grow on you and deepen your understanding and make you understand the meaning of life. It will remove the folly of unbelief. The verses of the *Gita* when understood will work in a striking manner, unobtrusively.” The Lord tries all methods that make men good. The Lord gives a warning and sounds an alarm and presents an inducement. In short the *Gita* brings peace and wisdom. In the Professor’s view, the *Gita* is a religion and philosophy for our time.

## Conclusion

The last years of Professor Radhakrishnan were sad. He did not make any public appearance after he retired as President of India. For a few years he did not show interest in anything. I do not know how to account for it.

Of all the Presidents of the Indian Union, he was a world figure. No speech of his—political, educational, religious, after dinner one—was not without its thought provoking message. To read the speeches is a liberal education. Every page is strewn with pearls of wisdom. He had a prodigious memory, and could repeat any long passage after one reading. This sometimes interfered with his writing. He could not avoid and resist the temptation of quoting authorities in support of his statement. No book of his is without the delicious display of vast erudition of stimulating thought. He was up-to-date in his reading, the writings of great scholars of the East and the West.

There are a few austere critics who hold the view that the Professor had no philosophy of his own as that of Plato, Aristotle, William James, Santayana etc. This is not true. It redounds to his credit that a huge volume on his writings was brought out in America by Paul Arthur Schilpp in the series entitled, "The library of living philosophers" and Radhakrishnan takes his place along with Dewey, Russell, Santayana and other great thinkers.

His Philosophy can be called *Spiritual Humanism*. This is developed in Hibbert lectures, *An idealist view of life*. Radhakrishnan's idealism is not as same as Sankara



or Barkeley. He does not agree with the *Mayavada* of Sankara in its entirety. He does admit the doctrine of *Maya* but, interprets it as something wonderful and indescribable. Because of his great respect for human personality, Dr. Radhakrishnan finds it difficult to agree to the doctrine, in complete merging of the individual soul with Brahman.

Students of Indian Philosophy find, that the Professor, though he does not acknowledge, is influenced by Sri Aurobindo. He believes in the doctrine of evolution as well as involution. He does not downgrade the personalistic conception of God. When compared with the Absolute of Sankara, Dr. Radhakrishnan holds Nirguna Brahman's manifestation is Saguna Brahman. The Professor's criticism of Ramanuja's *Visishtadwaita* and Madhwa's *Dwaita* have not been revised by him. If one asks what his philosophy is, it is a kind of *Adwaita*, modifying Sankara, and diluting it with Megelian idealism. His idealism is not solipsism nor is it the nihilism of the Buddha. It is constructive idealism. He wants to combine *Gyana*, *Bhakthi* and *Vairagya* as modes of God-realisation. His writings on devotion glow with great warmth and are illustrated from the outpourings of the great illustrious line of *Bhaktas* in the East and the West. His reading of Christian literature is as profound as that of his reading Eastern devotional writings. No other Indian Philosopher ever wrote so much and lived so long and achieved such greatness and remarkable recognition among world thinkers as Dr. Radhakrishnan.

## APPENDIX I

### My Search for Truth

I was born on September 5, 1988, at a small place, Tiruttani, forty miles to the north-west of Madras, in South India, the second child of Hindu parents, who were conventional in their religious outlook. I have not had any advantages of birth or of wealth. The early years of life till twelve were spent in Tiruttani and Tirupati, both famous as pilgrim centres. I cannot account for the fact that from the time I knew myself I have had firm faith in the reality of an unseen world behind the flux of phenomena, a world which we apprehend not with the senses but with the mind, and even when I was faced by grave difficulties, this faith has remained unshaken. A meditative frame of mind is perhaps responsible for my love of loneliness. Side by side with my outward activities, there is in me an inner life of increasing solitude in which I love to linger. Books, the vistas they unveil, and the dreams they awaken, have been, from the beginning my constant and unfailing companions. I am not quite at home in the conventional social functions by which life's troubles are tempered to most of us. When I am in company, unless it be with one or two who know me well, it is with an effort that I get along. But I have an almost uncanny knack of putting myself *en rapport* with any individual, high or low, old or young, if the need arises. While I am essentially, shy and lonely, I pass for a social and sociable man. My withdrawn nature and social timidity have given me a



reputation that I am difficult to know, Again, I am said to be cold and strong-willed, while I know that I am the opposite of it. I am capable of strong and profound emotions, which I generally leads to conceal. I am nervously organized, sensitive and high-strung. If with an unstable, sensitive nature and ordinary intellectual gifts I have not yet made a mess of this life, and if the Editor thinks it worth his while to ask me to contribute an autobiographical essay to this volume, it is due to good luck. When Napoleon's eagle eye flashed down the list of officers proposed for promotion to higher rank, he used to scribble in the margin of a name "Is he lucky?" I have luck, and it is this that has protected me thus far. It is as if a great pilot had been steering my ship through the innumerable rocks and shoals on which other barks had made shipwreck. The major decisions of my life, I think, have been taken under a sort of plan, and yet when the choice is made, I have a feeling that an invisible hand has been guiding me for purposes other than my own. I do not, however, pretend that I enjoy the special care of providence. Such a feeling, if it means more than the simple truth that the Supreme has an individual interest in and a delicate care for human beings, that its love is individual, immediate, and intimate, is an irrational prejudice. While I attribute the little success I have achieved to this luck or guidance, I do not want to shift the blame for my failure to ill luck or circumstances. My achievements are not entirely my own, but my mistakes are in large part due to my own folly or weakness.

I had my school and college career in Christian missionary institutions. At an impressionable period of my life, I became familiar not only with the teaching of the New Testament, but with the criticism levelled by Christian missionaries on Hindu beliefs and practices. My pride as a Hindu roused by the enterprise and eloquence of Swami Vivekananda, was deeply hurt by the treatment accorded to Hinduism in missionary institutions.

My religious sense did not allow me to speak a rash or a profane word of anything which the soul of man holds or has held sacred.

This attitude of respect for all creeds, this elementary good manners in matters of spirit, is bred into the marrow of one's bones by the Hindu tradition, by its experience of centuries. Religious tolerance marked the Hindu culture from its very beginnings.

The challenge of Christian critics impelled me to make a study of Hinduism and find out what is living and what is dead in it. The spirit of the times, in which India, so to say, was turning in its sleep, strengthened this resolve. The philosophy courses for the B.A. and the M.A. degrees in the Madras University did not demand any acquaintance with the Indian system of thought and religion. Even to-day Indian philosophy forms a very minor part of philosophical studies in Indian Universities. In partial fulfilment of the conditions for the M.A. degree examinations, I prepared a thesis on the *Ethics of the Vedanta*, which was intended to be a reply to the charge that the Vedanta system had no room for ethics. At the time (1908) when I was only a young student of twenty, the publication of a book with my name on the title-page excited me a great deal, though now, when I look back upon the juvenile and rhetorical production, I am ashamed that I ever wrote it. My great surprise, however, was that my distinguished teacher, Professor A.G. Hogg, the Principal of the Madras Christian College, a thinker of great penetration in theological matters, awarded me a testimonial, which I still treasure, in which he expressed himself thus: "The thesis which he prepared in the second year of his study for this degree shows a remarkable understanding of the main aspects of the philosophical problems, a capacity for handling easily a complex argument besides more than the average mastery of good English."



All the same, that little essay indicates the general trend of my thought. Religious feeling must establish itself as a rational way of living. If ever the spirit is to be at home in this world, and not merely a prisoner or a fugitive, spiritual foundations must be laid deep and preserved worthily. Religion must express itself in reasonable thought, fruitful action, and right social institutions.

From April 1909, when I was appointed to the Department of Philosophy in the Madras Presidency College, I have been a teacher of Philosophy and engaged in the serious study of Indian philosophy and religion.

My occasional contributions to learned magazines like the *International Journal of Ethics*, *Monist* and *Quest* had for their objective the establishing of the ethical character of the Hindu religion.

In regard to my views on Hindu ethics and the doctrine of *maya*, I found great support in the writings of Rabindranath Tagore. The results of my study of his works (translated into English) are embodied in a book which Macmillan (London) brought out in 1918. This book, which has all the faults of immature youth, secured on the whole of a friendly reception. The poet himself was extremely generous in his appraisal of my effort.

In 1918 I was appointed Professor of Philosophy in the new University of Mysore. I published a series of articles in *Mind* on M. Bergson's philosophy, pointing out that he was an absolutist. From a similar standpoint I examined the philosophical views of Leibniz, James Ward, William James, Rudolf Eucken, Hastings Rashdall, Bertrand Russell and Lord Balfour, and pointed out that their implicit support of the pluralism or pluralistic theism is traceable to the interference of religion with the pursuit of philosophy. This thesis was set forth in an ambitious work on *The Reign of Religion in Contemporary Philosophy* (Macmillan, 1920). It had a very warm

reception. Noted critics praised it beyond its merits. Apart from many favourable reviews by men of established reputation in philosophy like J.H. Muirhead, J.S. Mackenzie and J.E.C. Mc Taggart, among others, Professor Hinman America in his presidential address to the American Philosophical Association selected for treatment "Two Representative Idealists, Bosanquet and Radhakrishnan." To be coupled with Bosanquet is an honour which more eminent men would covet. The book was used by students in metaphysics not only in Indian universities, but in several British and American ones, and I became somewhat known as a writer of philosophy.

In 1921 I was appointed to the most important philosophy chair in India, King George V Chair of Mental and Moral Science in the University of Calcutta. Professor J.H. Muirhead, to whom I owe more than I can tell, invited me (in 1917) to write a systematic and readable account of Indian Philosophy for his famous "Library of Philosophy." I put together my studies on this subject, which occupied me from 1908, and published the two volumes. The task of bringing together a multitude of minute particulars into a creative and cumulative relationship is not an easy one.

Indian philosophy is now recognised as an important branch of study and even the editors of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (fourteenth edition) found some space for it and asked me to write the article on "Indian Philosophy."

Through my articles in the *Hibbert Journal*, I was brought into contact with its editor, Dr. L.P. Jacks, late principal of Manchester College, Oxford, who graciously invited me to give the Upton Lectures on "The Hindu View of Life," in 1926, in his college. I was enabled to accept his invitation, as the University of Calcutta deputed me to represent it at the Congress of the Universities of the British Empire in June 1926 and the International Congress of Philosophy at the Harvard



University in September 1926. This way my first visit to Europe and America and I have the most pleasant recollections of it. The very warm reception which I had in Oxford and Cambridge, in Harvard and in Princeton, in Yale and Chicago, and many other places, is fixed in my mind.

In the lectures on "The Hindu View of Life" I represent Hinduism as a progressive historical movement still in the making. Its adherents are not custodians of a deposit, but runners carrying a lighted torch. The weaknesses of the Hindu faith which have drawn the institution into disgrace and are to-day blocking the way for social advance are due to a confusion between tradition, and truth. We must preserve the spirit of truth which will guide us into all truth. God does not say "I am Tradition," but he says, "I am Truth." Truth is greater than its greatest teachers. We must realise that the history of the race is strewn with customs and institutions which were invaluable to first and deadly afterwards. Gross abuses which still survive require to be cut off with an unsparing hand. Hinduism insists on the upward striving, not only in the sphere of morals but in that of intellect. It is not to be regarded as either pessimistic or fatalistic. The law of *Karma* affirms the implicit presence of the past in the present. When we unconsciously or mechanically follow the impulse of the past, we are not exercising our freedom. But we are free when our personal subject becomes a ruling centre. It is not necessary for me to refer to the different criticisms urged against the Hindu faith since the chief of them are considered in my Upton Lectures since published as a book, *The Hindu View of Life*.

At the Philosophical Congress held at Harvard University in September 1926, the lack of spiritual note in modern civilisation was the theme of my address to the general meeting, an idea which I set forth in some detail in a small book called *Kalki or the Future of Civilisation*. In

the last few decades the world has been transformed so rapidly and completely, at any rate in its superficial aspects. Science helps us to build our life, but another discipline is necessary to strengthen and refine the living spirit. Though we have made enormous progress in knowledge and the scientific inventions, we are not above the level of past generations in ethical and spiritual life. In some respects we have perhaps declined from their standards. Our natures are becoming mechanised; void within, we are reduced to mere atoms in a community, members of a mob. Behaviourist psychology teaches us that man has no inwardness and can be understood completely from the standpoint of the observer.

Some of the recent attempts at the replanning of society are attended with this danger. Though man has compelled the world to minister to his needs, though the application of modern science to production and distribution enables us to provide the possibilities of material well-being for all and make poverty an anachronism, still large numbers of men are suffering from poverty and starvation. The chaotic condition is due to a lack of fellowship and co-operation. The Russian experiment, whatever we may think of it, is at least an honest attempt to secure for all an equal share in things which constitute the physical basis of life.

The glaring contrasts of poverty and wealth are not accepted by them as inevitable. Even Fascism is labouring to build up a true communal life and effect a more equitable distribution of power, wealth and opportunity. Only the unfortunate result of these attempts is mutual conflict and suppression of individual liberty. There is standardisation of souls; a loss of self-confidence, a tendency to seek salvation in herds. Not only is the individual robbed of his freedom to order his life as he wills, he is also deprived of the liberty to think as he will and express his thoughts and opinions. Society has



become a prison. That there is a real feeling for humanity in these desperate attempts to check the economic exploitation of the masses, one can readily admit. But if it is to be achieved by the other exploitation of the baser passions of human nature, its selfishness and hatred, its insolence and fanaticism, the ideal order will be an inhuman one. Let us by all means establish a just economic order, but let us also note that the economic man is not the whole man. For a complete human being, we require the cultivation of the grace and joy of souls overflowing in love and devotion and free service of a regenerated humanity. If we wish to realise the reign of law and justice in this world, it is to enable the soul to gain inward peace. Physical efficiency and intellectual alertness are dangerous if spiritual illiteracy prevails.

We see things happening in the civilised world today that recall the worst phases of the dark ages. New gods of race and nation are set up in the place of God who is dethroned. The souls of men are poisoned and perverted by collective myths. They control their loyalties, present apocalyptic hopes, demand an intense and passionate devotion to a goal outside and greater than the self and serve as religions which have the power to give luminous meaning to life and stir the will to action. The few who have the perception of the unity of mankind and feel the happiness and misery of neighbouring people as though it were their own are swamped by the millions who are taught to accustom themselves to the idea of humanity as an assemblage of combatant communities whose strength is tested through war. The perilous rivalries of national states are accompanied by a furious competition in armaments. It is no use deceiving ourselves that armaments are not meant to be used. We cannot help using them any more than an animal eating food can help throwing out filth. At the rate at which preparations for war are proceeding and men's passions are stirred, a

catastrophe compared with which the last war was only a picnic seems to be drawing near.

Civilisation is an act of spirit, not of body or of mind. Achievements of knowledge and power are not enough; acts of spirit and morality are essential. Man must become an active, purposeful force. He must cease to believe in an automatic law of progress which will realise itself irrespective of human ideals and control. Man is not a detached spectator of the progress imminent in human history but an active agent remoulding the world nearer to his ideals. Every age is much what we choose to make it. The trouble with our civilisation is that in our anxiety to pursue the things of time, we are neglecting the things that are not of time, the enduring and the eternal. The significance of man's life is not exhausted by his service of the earthly kingdom. The whole complex range of human life becomes shallow, aimless and unsatisfying if it is not short through with a sense of the eternal. We must build all relationship on a basis of understanding fellowship remembering the controlling principle that life on earth is meaningless apart from its eternal background. Growth of civilisation is marked by an increase of genuineness, sincerity and unselfishness. The only effective way of altering society is the hard and slow one of changing individuals. If we put first things first through patient effort and struggle, we will win power over circumstances and mould them. Only a humanity that strives after ethical and spiritual ideals can use the great triumphs of scientific knowledge for the true ends of civilisation.

I had an opportunity of expressing this view in its philosophical setting when in 1929 I was invited to take the post vacated by Principal J. Estlin Carpenter in Manchester College, Oxford. This invitation gave me an opportunity to lecture to the students of the University of Oxford on Comparative Religion. During this visit, I had



the privilege of giving the Hibbert Lectures on "An idealist View of Life" to large audiences at the Universities of London and Manchester. These lectures state new views on some of the ultimate problems of philosophy.

The whole course of Hindu philosophy is a continuous affirmation of the Truth that insight into reality does not come through analytical intellect, though it is accessible to the human mind in its integrality. In this conviction Hindu thinkers are supported by many others, including Plato, Plotinus, St. Paul, St. Augustine, Luther and Pascal.

God is not the great silent sea of infinity in which the individuals lose themselves but the Divine person who inspires the process, first last and without ceasing. To say that God created the world is an understatement. He is creating now and for all the time. History is in this sense the epic of the Divine will, a revelation of God. The Divine works and shines through the earthly medium. In Hindu religion the Divine is said to be the *Kavi* or the Poet, the maker or the creator. God as person is deeply concerned in the affairs of this world. He is the Friend, Judge, and the Redeemer of mankind. God is the Absolute spirit, timeless and unchanging, from the cosmic or human end. He is the way in which the Absolute not only appears to and is known by us, but also the way in which it works in the cosmic process. The Absolute is at once the sum and source of limitless possibilities. One of these possibilities is being actualised in the cosmic process. To this possibility which is in course of accomplishment, the Absolute assumes the form of God who is guiding the world with a previous knowledge of its general plan and direction. God is not the figment of our minds. God is a real symbol of the Absolute reality, an aspect of the Absolute in its relation to this specific possibility which is being actualised. He is not a distorted reflection of the

Absolute but, as Leibniz says, a phenomenon well founded in the reality. When there is a complete identity between God and the world, that is, when God's purpose is fulfilled, when all individual spirits are perfected, God Himself will relapse into the Absolute, "creation being thus at once ransomed and annulled by the cessation of the impulse to individuate." The lapse of the world does not take away from the infinite reality of the Absolute spirit.

This, in brief, is the view that I set forth at some length in my Hibbert Lectures, and I am grateful for the very warm reception that they had. Distinguished philosophers of Europe and America, including Samuel Alexander and Bertrand Russell, J.H. Muirhead and J.S. Mackenzie, W.R. Inge and L.P. Jacks, Rabindranath Tagore and Sir Herbert Samuel, welcomed it in the most generous terms.

Some of the sermons and occasional addresses which I gave while at Oxford are brought together in a small book *East and West in Religion*. The main theme of these addresses is that religion consists in doing justice, in loving mercy and in making our fellow-creatures happy. A saint is not a stained-glass image, but one who works for his fellowmen and endeavours to establish a new relation of loving kindness among them. He regards an individual's need as a sufficient claim on his generosity. We must believe in the equality of men not only in the soul but in the flesh. It is true that we cannot fall in love with a telephone directory. Love of humanity must be defined in terms of the men and women with whom we are brought into contact.

It was a great experience for me to preach from Christian pulpits in Oxford and Birmingham, in Manchester and Liverpool. It heartened me to know that my addresses were liked by Christian audiences. Referring to my sermon on "Revolution through



Suffering," an Oxford daily observed," Though the Indian preacher had the marvellous power to weave a magic web of thought, imagination and language, the real greatness of his sermon resides in some indefinable spiritual quality which arrests attention, moves the heart and lifts us into an ampler air."

Those to whom life has been kind should not accept this good fortune as a matter of course. If one is allowed to lead a secure life while so many around who deserve better are confined to miserable surroundings and subjected to tragic blows, it is one's duty to think continually of those who were denied the privilege one had.

My position as a teacher brought me into close relations with young men and women in the plastic years of their life.

The subject of philosophy, which is not primarily utilitarian in its aims, is a great instrument of liberal education. Its aim is one of elevating man above worldliness, of making him superior to circumstances, of liberating his spirit from the thralldom of material things. Philosophy claims to implant in the minds of those who are of a nature to profit by its teachings and influence a taste for those things which the world cannot give and cannot take away. If properly pursued, it arms us against failure, against sorrow and calamity, against boredom and discouragement. It may not perhaps prepare us for success if we mean by it accumulation of material wealth. But it helps us to love those aims and ideals, the things beyond all price, on which the generality of men who aim at success, do not set their hearts. To form men is the object of philosophy.

In the hours I was privileged to spend with my pupils, it was my ambition to educate them to a belief in a spiritual and ethical universe.

A friend of mine, who has known me well for over twenty years, made a comment rather sarcastically that I am incapable of indignation, that I am foolproof, that I suffer gladly not only fools but the "sinful". I am afraid that this observation is not untrue. It is not easy to know the difference between good men and bad. Ideas may be theoretically divided into good and bad but not men and women, for each of us contains, in himself or herself, in varying degrees, the good and the bad, the high and the low, the true and the false. Besides, society has queer notions about right and wrong.

There is a queer impression that Hindus, especially those who talk about philosophy, are most domesticated in the world of spirit. Thanks to it, my correspondence includes letters asking advice and help in every conceivable perplexity. Some of these letters are absurd, some pathetic and some both. Cranks and faddists fond of their own remedies for ills of this world are a good many of these correspondences. But now and again one chances on long letters from some old friends; others who through communication have come near, still others who are complete strangers, about their own travails or those of their friends. My relations have little to do with distinctions of age, class or calling, rank or education. It pleases me to know that to some lonely or enslaved souls I was perhaps the only or the first person to show any sympathy or understanding. At times my interest in other people has been so strong and spontaneous that it has been misunderstood. There have been cases where the results I expected never arose in spite of my best endeavours. They only indicate that I have not been able to handle these problems with either wisdom or adequacy.

Yet withal, I am happy that I have been brought into human contact with quite a number of my fellow-men. I do not believe that there is any such thing as chance or



mere coincidence. Desires work unseen through forces of nature. Apparently unimportant happenings sometimes play an unexpected part in our lives. There is such a thing as spiritual gravitation. We can never wholly tell us to why certain people attract us. We cannot help responding to them and finding them interesting. Beauty can never understand itself, says Goethe. Attraction also is only partly explained. Certain persons attach with devotion and why they do so cannot be accounted for. The real causes of our likes and dislikes are usually hidden deep down in the obscure recesses of our nature. They have little to do with reason or logic and we cannot account for them. Wonderful have been the experiences which vouchsafed me in this life. Through them the deeps of my own nature have been opened to me in a surprising manner. Through them my life has become more intimately connected with the surrounding social order, more complicated, more difficult and yet far richer and fuller. They have forged links of human affection and regard, given me high joys as well as deep sorrows, and have become inextricably interwoven with the fabric of my life. They in a sense make for genuine fulfilment of destiny.

I have had my own share of anxiety, trouble and sorrow, but I have had blessings, too, more than I deserve, the chief being the affection and kindness which I received in abundance from other people. For all these a thanks-offering is due.

## APPENDIX II

# Fellowship of the Spirit

I am greatly honoured by the invitation to participate in this significant function and give the Address. This is an honour to my country where a process of creation has been at work for many centuries, to which different races have contributed, the Dravidians and the Aryans, the Iranians and the Greeks, the Muslims and the Christians. Adherents of different faiths live there in freedom and fellowship, in spite of occasional conflicts and set-backs.

The donors of this Foundation, I am informed, believe in the fruitful interchange of religious ideas and hope that such an interchange may enrich our lives and pave the way for a fellowship of the spirit.

In the last few decades amazing advances in science and technology have made the world into a neighbourhood bound by political ties and economic arrangements, where what happens anywhere affects everywhere. To convert this neighbourhood into a world community we need goodwill and understanding of the basic principles which govern the lives of the different people. Religion has been a major factor in the development of the civilisations of the world.

A university is a seat of learning, not a centre of worship. It believes in the pursuit of knowledge and not in the establishment of a cult. As University men it is our

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Opening address at the Centre for the Study of World Religions, Harvard Divinity School, Harvard



privilege and honour to seek for truth and in this pursuit we should not be deterred by the fear of what we might find. In many theological institutes both in the East and the West, students grow up in profound ignorance of other religions which, if they are presented to them, are done only in gross caricature. They are all full of polemics and apologetics. By such a treatment the secret of an alien religion is missed and its genius outraged. By getting the adherents of different religions to work together in a spirit of co-operation and mutual respect, we will promote appreciation of religions at their best.

It is in consistency with the great tradition of this (Harvard) University that the Center (for the study of world religions) should be established here. The education it imparts does not lack in contemporaneity. It carries the spirit of our civilisation which, though rooted in the past, is moving toward a new future. St. Paul in his last letter to his first European converts, the Philippians, written during his captivity and trial, speaks about "forgetting all that is completed and reaching out to the things that lie before," It is the great task of universities like this to push forward the frontiers of freedom not only in outer space but in the human soul.

## II

The rise of a creature reflecting on himself and his environment is a greater development in evolution. Man is said to be the maker of things, *homo faber*. Man is also a pattern maker. When his cold and hunger are conquered, when his appetites and desires are satisfied he wishes to find out if there is any pattern in things, any purpose to existence, any meaning in life. He cannot be content with formlessness, irrationality, uncertainty, chaos.

When man reflects on the finite and limited character of his existence, he is overcome by fear, which is, as Heidegger says, "more primordial than man himself."

Spinoza begins his treatise *On the Improvement of the Understanding* with the words: "I saw that I stood in extreme peril and that I was compelled with all my strength to seek a remedy, however uncertain, as a sick man in the grip of a mortal disease foreseeing inevitable death unless a remedy be applied, is compelled to search with all his strength for that remedy; however uncertain it be, for every hope he has is placed therein." Man asks, Is ultimate nothingness all or is there any meaning behind it all?

In the words of the Upanishad the suffering individual cries out, "Lead me from the unreal to the real. Lead me from darkness to light. Lead me from death to eternal life." Man can step out of the world and this indicates that he has something of the non-temporal in him. The Buddha believes that there is beyond the world of *karma*, of necessity a world of freedom, of *nirvana*. Christianity affirms that death is not all. "He is risen." Death has no sting; grave has no victory. In Handel's *Messiah* we read: "Though worms destroy my body yet in my flesh shall I see God."

Man's fear and anguish are the result of the conflict in him. He belongs to two worlds, the spiritual and the natural. Existence is essentially a process in time. It is perched on a razor's edge, as it were, which divides being from non-being. Human being is involved in non-being. We were not: we will not be. What is the nature of being? What is the mystery of non-being which surrounds and conditions existence as we know it. Being needs non-being for its manifestation. St. Augustine in the first chapter of his *Confessions* asks what his longing for God means. Does it mean that he has found God or has not found God? If he had not found God, he would not know of God since it is God who gives him the yearning for God. If he found God and known him fully, he would be incapable of yearning since he would be fulfilled and so would not have to struggle and suffer.



Man is a bridge between two worlds. He would cease to be human if he belonged only to one world. Life is a perpetual drama between the visible and the invisible. Man looks to the world of truth, goodness and beauty not as another world but as the still unrealised good of the world.

There is an inner urge in human nature which impels men to seek in endless ways for something that they do not fully comprehend though they believe it to be the Supreme Reality. Man cannot be happy until he attains the truth.

Everything that lives aims at its own perception, the blade of grass, the flowering tree, the flying bird, the running deer. While the sub-human species work according to pre-determined patterns, man by virtue of his intelligence and capacity for moral choice has to work out his future consciously. The period of involuntary development of minerals, plants, animals has ended with the advent of man. In the depths of his consciousness he feels that he is incomplete, that he has to be surpassed, that he has to enter a larger life of spirit and freedom, that he is still in the making, that he has to make himself. Religion has been the discipline used by man to achieve the goal of spiritual ascent.

The increase of knowledge and the progress of material conditions have led to a weakening of interest in the life of spirit. The scientific temper which has become a part of modern man's mental equipment finds it difficult to accept religious beliefs and dogmas. They seem to obstruct the path to natural truth and moral progress. If we accept religious traditions as unalterable truths we face an unbridgeable chasm between faith and reason. A dogmatic religion obstructs the free flow of ideas and the spirit of inner life.

The movement of Logical Positivism holds that religious truths are not truths because they are not empirically verifiable.

Besides, religion has tolerated barbarism, cruelty and ignorance. While religious men claim that they are bound by the moral code, while they preach love and brotherhood, they condone wars and persecutions. Man has become man's worst enemy. There is no sense of urgency among religious men to improve the human condition. Men and nations choose evil for the sake of attaining a good cause.

We confuse the voice of God with national, racial and political insanities. Soren Kierkegaard says: "What we have before us is not Christianity but a prodigious illusion, and the people are not pagans but live in the blissful concept that they are Christians." Lenin once put a question to a bishop: "Bring me one man in the whole of Christendom who lives today as Paul lived and I will have faith." Many people give up religion because they have known too many religious men!

It is one of the major tragedies of the world that the great religions instead of uniting mankind in mutual understanding and goodwill divide mankind by their dogmatic claims and prejudices. They affirm that religious truth is attained in this or that special region, by this or that chosen race, condemning others either to borrow from it or else suffer spiritual destitution.

By identifying religion with dogmas and beliefs we fought wars over abstract theological differences. To recover the Holy Tomb the crusaders engaged in bloodshed, cruelty and treachery. We are familiar with the Presbyterian elder who concluded his argument with a Jesuit by saying: "We must agree to differ. We are both trying to serve the same God--you in your way and I in His." This attitude is not out-moded.

### III

The mind of man, proud of its liberation from religion with its legends which ignore the teachings of



science and with its demands which are not consistent with the principles of morals and the needs of humanity, is becoming aware of an emptiness which increasing knowledge and humanitarianism are not able to fill. In our eagerness to throw away the fetters of dogmatic religion we are becoming the victims of an oppressive form of bondage imposed by secularist enlightenment. If millions of our people are in neurotic condition, if mental hospitals are crowded, if the demand for psychiatrists is on the increase, if a sense of boredom and use of sedatives are the constant companions of many of us, it shows that where an ideal of purpose should be there is only a vacuum. We try to cover up the growing gulf between our inner and outer life by adopting the forms of religion. This is due to the inertia of habit or blind belief which is too lazy to question itself or a kind of utilitarianism which finds adherence to religious organisations useful socially and politically. The paradox of the situation is that we worship God and at the same time doubt his existence. Spiritual life is smothered in all religions by dead forms, making our daily life petty and trivial, breaking up our humanity into different sections, reducing our manhood into a narrow provincialism. We do not become aware of the many. We are shut off from the Universal Spirit by a hundred artificial barriers. We must recover the spiritual dimension of life, the lack of which has cramped and darkened the culture of the modern world.

Our difficulties are traceable to the confusion of belief with religious experience. Those who are satisfied with belief live on the surface and do not come to terms with the ultimate mysteries of life and death. Religion is life experienced in its depth.

Logical Positivism is not inconsistent with religion. Though it formally denies the validity of metaphysics it insinuates its own metaphysical views about the world and the individual. Many scientific theories also are

interpretations of experience and not merely speculations. Scientific metaphysicians claim that they start with experience and their theories are meant to account for the facts observed. We cannot account for the cosmic process with its order and progress if we do not trace it to a Spiritual Reality, a Presence greater than man which governs the whole process. We recognise a First Cause, and from the pattern and purpose of the world admit that it is an expression of Reason. From the intimations of goodness and beauty in the universe we give a more positive content to the Being who is apprehended not only as the source of the world but also its lover. In the heart of man He is felt as the eternal Lord of righteousness. God is wisdom, goodness and love.

There are some who hold that this spiritual reality is not a mere hypothesis but a felt reality. Job said to God at the end of his long away: "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee." Experience is not limited to what comes to us through science and scientific method. It has many dimensions, moral, aesthetic and religious. We cannot exclude from the realm of experience the passion for knowledge, the excitement of beauty, the power of goodness and the sense of the numinous. When it is said that man is made in the image of God, it means that his pure longings are a reflection of a higher reality. There is a spark of the divine in man with which he has to establish direct contact. Whatever happiness is in the world it arises from a wish for the welfare of others; whatever misery in the world it arises from a wish for our own welfare.

Religion is a strenuous endeavour to apprehend truth. Dogmas and rites are intended to awaken in us the spiritual sense, to help us realise new possibilities of life.

The apprehension of Ultimate Reality is possible only through a life of austerity and self-control. If religion has not saved us from crimes and cruelties, it is because we



stop with the observance of rites and acceptance of dogmas and do not work for the purification of the soul, for the transformation of our being. The practice of spiritual exercises, of the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience represents the struggle to get beyond the normal sphere of earthly living. The symbol of the cross in Christianity means getting beyond the frontiers of the sensible world. If we renounce our ego, our nature will become the channel of divine energy, the instrument of divine action. If we are authentically religious, we will bless where others curse, love where others hate, forgive where others condemn, give where others grasp. He who lives in *Brahma* "shall deceive none, entertain no hatred for any one and never wish to injure any one through anger. He shall have measureless love for all creatures, even as a mother has for her only child whom she protects with her own life." That is the way the Buddha describes *Brahmavihara*.

If there are quarrels among religions it is because we shun all mystery and express religious truths in intellectual terms. The Supreme Reality cannot be unveiled in propositional forms. We can express it only through imaginative symbols. Disputes about dogmas have led to hysteria among the masses and fanaticism among the leaders. We have to get beyond dogmas if we are to feel the truth in the deeper layers of our consciousness. Religious forms without religious experience do not satisfy man's longing for spiritual fulfilment. True religion means whole-hearted commitment and dedication. In moments of devotion and prayer, we offer our whole being to an integrated reality without claiming any reward for ourselves. Religious experience unites rather than divides. In it the sense of separateness is transcended.

The foundation of moral and social progress is the establishment of ties of sympathy with others and of

harmony among the contending elements of our own nature. We must foster an inner sense of Unity. What is called Yoga is the discipline by which we silence the clamour of the senses and forms of intellect and awaken the spiritual in us. Spiritual vision is possible only for those who have understanding, compassion and love. As we need physical senses for the observation of the outer world we need an inner sense to perceive spiritual realities.

Spiritual perception and intellectual effort are not opposed to each other. Spiritual perception is integral insight. The high degree of intelligence which we have developed in the course of centuries should be used and not scrapped if we are to rid religion of errors and illusions. The wheel of history cannot be turned back or brought to a standstill. We cannot sink into the womb of the unconscious or revert to the irrational. Intellect helps us to discriminate between the authentic and the spurious non-objective perceptions. Intuition without reason is blind; reason without intuition is ungrounded. Only when they are held in balance does man attain wholeness.

God is the complete response to all the needs of the empirical egos, emotional, intellectual and spiritual. Religion deals with the whole man. It is not lived in compartments. We have trust which is intellectual, worship which is emotional, and dedication which is volitional. We cannot accept any religious view without inward testimony of spirit at once incommunicable to others and self-evident to the individual. The word "awake" which the Upanishads, the Buddha and Jesus use means "experience". Do not go through life sleeping or dreaming. Awakening is personal experience.

We do not wish to eliminate the particular elements in different religion. Beliefs are the codified expressions of experience. Religious traditions, rites and ceremonies do not grow in a void. They have roots in the soil and they are nourished by the same life-giving and life-sustaining



elements. We accept difference and try to understand them. We do not encourage the effort to recast the world in any one image. We do not believe in any religious Esperanto.

Though our thinking is international or global, our particular commitments, so long as they are not injurious to human fellowship, should be fostered. Religion is a response to the supersensible reality which we call God of which all men are aware dimly or clearly. We may not all see the same part of the spiritual landscape or see it with equal lucidity. Because the reality is one, the responses should have something in common in spite of all diversities. However unique religions may be, there are certain trends which are common to all of them. Besides, they have to reckon today with scientific knowledge, modern criticism, growing conscience and the emerging unity of the world. As a result they tend to approximate to each other, for all religions are renewing themselves.

#### IV

In the remaining part of this discourse I shall refer to developments in the major religions and I can do so only in broad terms and in a summary way. Behind the confused jumble of ideas and practices and the spiritual ferment, one can find certain patterns which are more or less alike. These recurrent patterns show that human nature is fundamentally the same and that is our hope for the future.

The religious tradition of India has had from its early beginnings a distinctive character. It has been vital, flexible and in a state of constant growth. It has throughout its history been faithful to the idea of unity in diversity. It respects distinctions and autonomous individualities of social groups, so long as they cooperate and fit into the social pattern which has been woven across the centuries.

Archaeologists tell us of a thriving pre-Aryan civilisation in India which extended from the Makran coast to Kathiawar and in the north to the foothills of the Himalayas. Its extent was that of an irregular triangle with the three sides measuring 950, 700 and 550 miles respectively. The excavations in this region reveal a mature civilisation with considerable affinities to those of Sumer, Elam and Mesopotamia. Though we are still unable to read the inscriptions which we find engraved on the excavated seals, there is no doubt about the close connection between the cultures of West Asia and North India. The people had a script, a system of weights and measures, and a fair knowledge of metallurgy. This civilisation functioned in peace between 2700 and 1700 B.C., though it may have lead its beginnings much earlier. It is difficult to believe that this high civilisation with large cities, well-constructed houses, large granaries, impressive baths and sanitary arrangements should have disappeared without leaving any traces on the later Indian civilisation.

In the seals are found prototypes of the ascetic god, Siva, seated in the position of a Yogi, surrounded by animals. There is also evidence of the cult of the mother-goddess which is still prevalent in India. The yoga posture suggests the evolution of man from one plant of consciousness to a higher through meditation and self-control. It emphasises the essential loneliness of the true individual.

Our knowledge of the religion of the Indus valley civilisation is slight and what is said here is purely conjectural.

## V

The next stage of Indian civilisation is marked by Aryan ascendancy. The Indo-Aryan civilisation may have grown up in the third millenium B.C. The Aryans akin to



the Iranians spoke a language belonging to the Indo-European group of languages. There are similarities not only in the language but in mythology, religious cults, social institutions and customs between the Indians in the East and the Europeans including the Teutons in the extreme West.

The anonymous authors of the four Vedas which were transmitted by word of mouth from teacher to pupil gave India a definite direction in the matter of philosophy and religion. The central truth that religion is a matter of experience is proclaimed. In the *Rig Veda* it is said that the sages see constantly the highest dwelling place of God even as the naked eye sees the spread-out sky. Knowledge of the Supreme is of the nature of perception, though of a non-objective character.

The description of what is seen is both negative and positive, super-personal and personal. The Real is the wholly Other, the ineffable and the unchanging. It is also the God of theism.

It is variously described:

*ekam sad vipri bahudha vadanti*

“The Real is one, the learned speak of it variously.”

Such a view did not lend support to dogmatism or intolerance. While the Greek religion turned its back on Olympian mythology, the *Rig Veda* adopted a more humble attitude and recognised the many gods and goddesses who were alive in the collective unconscious and had their roots deep in popular imagination. They were said to be the messengers of the Eternal.

The *Atharva Veda* tells us that man is a mixture of time and eternity:

*Yatramrtan ca mrtyus ca pursue 'dhi samahite*

Death and the Deathless are both within man. “I am the son of Mother Earth” destined for immortality. To

integrate the self, to divinise human nature is the aim of religion.

In the Upanisads, which are the last part of the Vedas, Vedanta, we find the intense longing of man for spiritual knowledge. He wishes to be released from subjection to time, to birth and death. "Seek to know Him who is to be known or suffer the pangs of death."

The Upanishads are clear that the Supreme can be grasped only by spiritual intuition. The ultimate mystery cannot be grasped by intellect, *na medhaya*, not by vast learning, *na bahuna srutena* and yet it can be known. The seers have proclaimed that they have known the Supreme Person dwelling beyond darkness. Those who know Him attain life eternal.

The Upanisads discover two mysteries at which we arrive when we reach the limits of rational knowledge, the one within the self called *Atman* and the other beyond the world called *Brahman*. The two are correlated since it is in and through the exercise of creative freedom that we feel the Divine. The *Chandogya Upanisad* states: "Verily this spirit is in the heart." This is the heart and therefore the heart is called *hrdayam*. The deepest reality is the inmost being of man. *Brahman* is *Atman*.

The Upanisads did not teach any creed or build rigid walls round them. They aimed at spiritual liberation. We have to be delivered from the thraldom of *avidya*, ignorance that darkness our consciousness, that tends to limit it within the boundaries of the personal life. Ignorance creates the separateness of the ego and thus becomes the source of all pride, greed, cruelty incidental to self-seeking. *Moksa* is the extinction of selfishness, the culmination of love; it is the state of illumination. Hindu religion repeatedly tried to rescue itself from the depths of forgetfulness by recalling men to their true aims and exhorting them to use all their powers to realise their relation to the infinite.



## VI

In spite of the exalted teachings of the Upanisads, people indulged in ritualism and observed the restrictions of caste. Protests were uttered by Mahavira and the Buddha. They tried to purify Hindu religion and rid it of its impurities.

Mahavira emphasised the relativity of religious truths, the doctrine of *ahimsa* or non-violence. He insisted on a life of austerity and self-control and compassion. Compassion is defined as that attitude of mind which impels one to help all creatures who are afflicted and needy, who are beset with fear and who beg for their lives.

Gautama the Buddha had a warm heart and a powerful intellect. He had sympathy for every form of sentient life. He was called the great compassionate one, *mahakarunika*. He appealed to reason and experimentally verifiable facts. He was not however quite consistent on this matter for he accepted certain doctrines which were in vogue in his time such as the law of *karma* and rebirth, the efficacy of Yoga practice as a training in self-discipline and in the concentration of mind leading up to states of trance (*samadhi*) and wisdom (*prajna*).

The Buddha meant his teaching for all. The legend tells us that the Buddha after his enlightenment hesitated to preach the truth to those who would not understand it but was persuaded by *Brahma* to teach the doctrine to all. He took the great resolve, "wide open is the door of the Immortal to all who have ears to hear." He told his disciples: "Go ye now, O Bhikkhus, and wander for the good of many men, out of compassion for the world, for the welfare, for the good and for the weal of gods and men." In the *Maha-parinibbana Sutta*, the Buddha tells Ananda: "I have preached the doctrine without making any distinction between within and without; the Tathagata has no such thing as the close fist of a teacher,

who keeps something back." In the *Anguttara Nikaya* it is said that, like the disc of the moon and the disc of the sun, the doctrine of the Tathagata" shines for all to see and is not hidden."

The Buddha denounced disputes about doctrines. He sits by the sacred fire of a Brahmin and discourses without condemning the worship carried on there. Siha, the general of the Licchavis was a Jain but when he became a convert to Buddhism, the Buddha bade him to continue to give food and gifts to the Jains who frequented his house. In the *Sigalovada sutta*, as in many other discourses, he lays down that a good man ministers to both Samanas and Brahmanas. He takes up old words and gives them new meanings. The real Brahman is one of uprightness and wisdom; the real sacrifice is to abstain from evil and follow the truth.

The four noble truth form an essential part of all varieties of Buddhism. One of the main teachings of the Buddha is the middle path which condemns both excessive asceticism and self-indulgence.

In the Hinayana system, the Buddha is a superman possessing supernatural powers though often he is treated as a human teacher who taught a new doctrine of salvation. The agnostic positivism of the Hinayana did not encourage metaphysical inquiry, did not inspire its followers with a cosmic reinforcement and a sense of close relationship with the Ultimate Reality.

The *an-atta* doctrine is not encouraging to moral life. If there is not a continuing self, we cannot hope for the survival of the self. In that case the doctrine of moral responsibility and of moral reward and punishment loses its point. The practice of ritual which bring about desirable effects on the human mind and subjective worship is found in other religions also, Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. It is Divine principle. Belief in the moral law of the universe, that whatsoever a



man soweth, that shall he also reap, means that justice, purpose and mind are fundamental to the cosmic situation.

In Mahayana Buddhism we have the continuance of the tradition of an Absolute and personal God. The *Sunya* is said to be neither existent, nor non-existent, neither both nor the absence of both. Because of *Sunya* all existence is made possible. "He that is allied to *Sunya* is allied to all that is; he that is removed from *Sunya* is removed from all that is."

*Sunya* is later identified with dharma. In the Dharmapuja vidhana (11th Century) we have a prayer." He that has no beginning nor end, no figure nor form, no birth nor death, who is all-pervading and unlimited by purpose, who is stainless and immortal, who is to be realised only through yoga, may that *Sunyamurti* be my saviour." *Sunya-dharma* is not negative non-being but positive being, the primal cause of all existence.

Zen Buddhism has developed a technique for leading beyond thinking to no-thought and its *satori* or the timeless enlightening moment of non-duality. The Zen experience is destructive of dogma and conceptual limitations. It does not believe in a personal God and has no faith in a saviour.

In all its forms Buddhism is a religion of love and compassion. The *Dhammapada* says : "All men trouble at violence, all men fear death; remembering that you are like unto them, do not kill, nor cause others to kill."

The Brahmanical, the Buddhist and the Jaina systems believe in the possibility of attaining bliss, *moksa*, *nirvana* which can be reached only by a saintly life of discipline. The perfect man is called *mukta*, *arhat*, *kevalin*, the *Buddha* or the *Jina*.

The *Bhagavadgita* emphasises the theistic side of religion. The *Bhagavata Purana* makes the Lord the

primordial teacher. God is the guide, the friend of the whole world, the goal of man's spiritual aspirations.

The *Bhagavadgita* is free from dogmatism and intolerance. "Even as men approach me, so do I accept them; men on all sides follow my path." The manifold approaches to the Supreme are admitted. *Tan akrtsnavido mandam krtsnavin na vicalayet*. Let no one who knows the whole unsettle the minds of the ignorant who know a part. It did not rule out polytheistic faith but simply outgrew it.

The great acaryas developed the meaning of the Upanishads in distinctive ways. Samkara and his followers stressed the super-personal aspects of the Upanishads, while the Vaisnava teachers, Ramanuja, Madhva, Vallabha, Nimbarka emphasised the theistic tendencies of the Upanishads and the *Bhagavadgita*.

## VII

The tenth century saw the invasions and conquests of the Muhammadans in India and their rule was established in the 16th century. The Muslim rulers looked upon themselves as Indians. Alberuni (eleventh century) in his famous work *Tahkik-i-Hind* (An Enquiry into India) marvelled at the religious tolerance of the Indian people, though he mentions their pride in their civilisation and contempt for all things foreign to it. Owing to this pride its growth stopped before large populations of aboriginals and outcastes were properly assimilated into the Hindu fold. The soul of India became crippled and was unable to accommodate the Muslims as it had all preceding invaders.

Islam emphasised monotheism and social service. Its effects were felt by the Hindu thinkers. Chandidas says:

Listen, brother man,  
Man is the highest object of creation  
Nothing else is higher.



The basic principle of Hinduism was revived by Jayadeva, Ramananda, Ekanath, Tukaram, Chaitanya, Mirabai and Tulsidas and attracted all those whose minds were dried up by metaphysical speculations and whose hearts rebelled against ceremonial piety and the restrictions of caste. They recognised the equality of all men and advocated a life of unselfish action. Others tried to fuse Hindu and Muslim ideas, Kabir, Nanak, Dadu, Birbhan, Jivandas belonged to the latter current.

Kabir (14th century A.D.) the disciple of the Hindu saint Ramananda, asks: "Where you reside, O Niranjana, is there anything positive or is the only *Sunya*?" "To break the unending chain of life and death, one should enter into *Sunya*."

Again

O how may I ever express that secret word?  
 O how can I say, he is unlike this, he is like that?  
 If I should say, he is within me, the universe  
 were shamed.  
 If I say, he is without me, it is false.....  
 He is neither manifest nor hidden.  
 He is neither revealed nor unrevealed.  
 There are no words to tell what he is.  
 The Purana and the Quran are mere words.  
 Lifting up the curtain I have seen.  
 Hindu and Turk were pots of the same clay.  
 Allah and Rama were but different names.

Dadu was a disciple of Kabir.

Nanak attempted a reconciliation between Hinduism and Islam on the basis of the teaching of the Upanisads and ended by creating the new creed of Sikhism.

I am neither a Hindu nor a Mussulman  
 But a worshipper of the Nirakar, or the formless.

Many Baul poets belonged to a similar current of thought.

One of them, called Madan sang:

Thy path, O Lord, is hidden by mosque and temple:  
I hear thine own call, but the guru stops the way.  
What give peace to my mind sets the world blaze—  
The cult of the One dies in the conflict of the many,  
The door to it is closed by many a lock, of Quran,  
Purana and the rosary.

Even the way of renunciations is full of tribulation:  
Wherefore weeps Madan in despair.

Akbar felt that truth was not the exclusive possession of any one religion and the sacred book of all religions taught the same truths. He attempted to synthesise the Hindu and Muslim faiths. He built at Fatehpur Sikri the famous House of worship (*Ibabat Khana*) where Muslim divines, Hindu sages, Jain teachers, Zoroastrian priests and Jesuit missionaries met and discussed problem of metaphysics and religion. Unconcerned by any of these teachers and yet strongly impressed by them, he promulgated a new creed *Din-i-Ilahi*, which was an amalgam of the truths of the different religions known to him. It appealed to none except its author. It is, however, an expression of the Indian ideal of toleration. Akbar's attempt failed because it was not a living synthesis but an intellectual eclecticism.

Dara Shikoh, son of Emperor Shah Jahan (Born on 20th March 1615, A.D.) was attracted to sufism which holds that there are as many roads to God as there are seekers of Him. He wrote many books including a Persian translation of fifty Upanisads. His interest was not that of a scholar but of a religious thinker. He found in the Upanisads, the essence of the doctrine of the unity of God and believed that the reference in the Quran to the "Hidden Book" *Ummul Kitab* was to the Upanisad, because "they contain the essence of unity and they are secrets which have to be kept hidden." He also wrote a



book on the mingling of the two oceans *Majinaul-Baharain*, the two oceans being Hinduism and Islam.

A century later Anquetil Duperron, a French scholar, translated the Persian text into French and Latin. The Latin version was published in 1801-1802. Through this Latin version Schopenhauer, Schelling and their followers got acquainted with the teaching of the Upanisads.

## VIII

About the time of the Moghul rule, the struggle of the European nations for the Indian market started. Vascoda Gama discovered the ocean route of Indian and arrived in 1498. The Portuguese obtained possession of Goa in the year 1509. For some centuries struggles continued between the Portuguese, the Spaniards, the Dutch, the French and the English for the exploitation of India, and by the end of the eighteenth century England had become the leading power.

The richness, tolerance and profundity of Indian religion and its enduring roots among the Indian people made it difficult for Christianity to spread fast in India. Some enlightened British rulers were impressed by India's historic past. Encouraged by Warren Hastings, Charles Wilkins brought out an English translation of the *Bhagavadgita*, to which Warren Hastings wrote an introduction in which he said that such works as the *Bhagavadgita* "will survive when the British dominion in India shall have long ceased to exist and when the sources which it once yielded of wealth and power are lost to remembrance.

The impact of Christianity brought about a religious awakening among the Hindus. Ram Mohan Roy (1772-1832) was the first great Indian to realise the fundamental unity of spirit in the Hindu, Muslim and Christian religions. He denounced the social thinking which defended caste and gave pseudo-scientific explanations of

unintelligent customs, and gross superstitions. He campaigned against the distortions that crept into Hinduism across the centuries and declared that they were inconsistent with teachings of the Vedas and the other religion classics. He says: "It will also appear evident that the Vedas, although they tolerate idolatry as the last provision for those who are totally incapable of raising their minds to the contemplation of the invisible God of nature, yet repeatedly urge the relinquishment of the rites of idol-worship and the adoption of a firmer system of religion....." in 1828 he founded the Brahma Samaj, Society of believers in God, open to men of all creeds, castes and classes. He advocated a rational theism based on the Vedas and the Upanisads. He denounced image worship and the caste system. The Hindu side was emphasised by Devendranath Tagore and the Christian influence by Keshub Chunder Sen. As Hinduism itself became liberal and reformist the Brahma Samaj got absorbed into it. All the developments of the Brahma Samaj emphasise the basic unity of all religions.

Hindu reformation was the aim of the Arya Samaj founded by Dayananda Saraswati (1824-1883) who proclaimed that the Vedic teaching was monotheistic and struggled against child marriage, caste and other social evils. He tried to unify all sections of Hindu society.

Ramakrishna (1836-1886) was in the direct line of *rsis* of the Upanisads. He stated: "When I think of the Supreme Being as inactive, neither creating, nor preserving nor destroying, I call him *Brahman* or *Purusa*, the superpersonal God. When I think of him as active, creating, preserving, destroying, I call him *sakti* or *maya* or *prakrti*, the personal God. But the distinction between them does not mean a difference. The personal and the super-personal are the same Being in the same way as milk and its whiteness, or the diamond and its lustre, or the serpent and its undulation are one. It is impossible to



conceive of the one without the other. The Divine Mother and *Brahman* are one." He advocates a life of action and service of man. He says: "Are you seeking God? Then seek him in man. The Divinity is manifest in man more than in any other object." He said that in all religions the human mind is revealed in its search for truth. This was affirmed by him as the result of his personal experience of the different religions

Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) emphasised social service and established Ramakrishna Missions in different parts of the world.

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) derived his inspiration from Indian classics. Hindu and Buddhist. When the people of India, under the influence of the West, overlooked their great cultural heritage, Rabindranath Tagore claimed that the western education occupies all the available space in the Indian mind and "kills or hampers the great opportunity for the creation of a new thought-power, by a new combination of truths." A genuine type of education will assimilate the new ingredients" as organic things similar to our own living tissues." He concludes: "For India to force herself along European lines of growth would not make her Europe, but only a distorted India."

Rabindranath wrote to a friend on February 25, 1914 as follows:

"I do not belong to any religious sect nor do I subscribe to any particular creed. This I know that the moment my God has created me he has made himself mine. He is ever active in the unfolding of my being through experiences of life and in the enfolding of it with the varied forces and beauties of this world. The very fact of my existence carries an eternal guarantee of love."

He says:

"As this mission of the rose lies in the unfoldment of

the petals which implies distinctness, so the rose of humanity is perfect only when the diverse races and the nations have evolved their perfected distinct characteristics but all attached to the system of humanity by the bond of love."

In the spirit of the Upanisads he speaks of the Supreme as both super-personal and personal:

"Again and again have I sent my call to my God and He has revealed Himself both in Man and in the Formless, in Enjoyment as well as in Renunciation. The spirit of Man reveals itself both in Personality and in the inexpressible. ...There, where Man is immortal, in that sphere do I want to live. It is for this reason, that amidst narrow, cramping confines I cannot pursue in my efforts to realise the Supreme man. Immortality dwells only there, where Man dwells in the Universal. Our manhood becomes eclipsed, whenever we turn to ourselves, and away from Him."

The spirit of India has been one of assimilation of the various elements that came into the country. When she failed to carry out this spirit, she herself declined. Thus Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) asked us to open our doors to all the winds that blow but not get swept off our feet. He was essentially a religious man. He wrote in his Autobiography: "What I want to achieve, what I have been striving and pining to achieve, these thirty years, is self-realisation, to see God face to face, *moksa*. I live and move and have my being in pursuit of this goal. All that I do by way of speaking and writing and all my ventures in the political field are directed to this same end." "I have not yet found him but I am seeking after him." He emphasised the *Gita* ideal of salvation through action. He lived and died for Hindu-Muslim brotherhood. He said that "the true beauty of Hindu-Muslim unity lies in each remaining true to his own religion and yet being true to



each other. Shortly before his death early in 1948 Gandhi undertook a fast to end communal disturbances and pleaded for brotherhood and understanding. "The reward will be the regaining of India's dwindling prestige, and her fast-fading sovereignty over the heart of Asia and thereby the world. I flatter myself with the belief that the loss of her soul by India will mean the loss of the hope of the aching, storm-tossed and hungry world."

He used the scriptures of all religions in his prayer meetings. Even today the Indian people use the scriptures of all religions for their spiritual satisfaction.

All these religious Leaders of India, Ram Mohan Roy, Ramakrishna, Rabindranath Tagore and Gandhi are ecumenical men, world citizens, *Visvamanava*, to use the Vedic expression.

India strove throughout her history for the freedom of spirit and the union of hearts. She does not destroy differences but discovers their underlying affinities. India did not treat other peoples who came to settle as aliens, did not ridicule their customs as incongruous but recognised and accepted them all. She has entered into the lives of others and assimilated elements from outside. When new ideas arise, old traditions are not discarded but are treated with respect and introduced by way of interpretation. She did not crave for uniformity. There is a famous passage in the *Prthvi Sukta* of the *Atharava Veda* which refers to the earth as a mother that bears various peoples, speaking different languages, practising different religious rites according to their various places of abode and nourishes them all with milk, with equal affection.

## IX

Persia was the connecting link between East and West, ancient Indian and ancient Greece. The oldest literary monuments of Iran are the Avestan Gathas which contain the sayings of Zarathustra. He is assigned to 7th

century B.C. if we assume that the prophet's patron, Kavi Vishtaspa is Hystaspes, the father of Darius I. There is another view which puts his date somewhere between 1000-900 B.C. on the evidence of Median names such as *Mazdaka* which are found in the Assyrian records of 8th century B.C.

The earliest hymns of the *Rg. Veda* contain references reminiscent of the Indo-Iranian, even Indo-European period. Pre-Zoroastrian man worshipped nature deities like Verethraghna, Mithra, Apam napat, Airyaman, Asura and Vayu. There is belief in Asa, the Divine order governing the world. Religion was ritualistic.

Zarathustra freed religion from the exclusive narrowness of the tribal God, the God of a chosen people and made him the God of all men. He gave a purified worship shown of blood sacrifices which soiled the altars of many other people of his time. Ahura Mazda (Ormuzd) is the one God, omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent. Ahura Mazda is the Lord of life and matter. In the cosmic process there is a struggle between two principles the Divine and the evil. Ahura Mazda, the wise Lord, is opposed to the evil principle, Angra Manyu (Ahriman). The forces of evil will be vanquished. But man has to make a decision for himself and face the consequences of his choice. "None of you shall listen to the doctrine and precepts of the followers of Evil." Zarathustra stressed not ritualistic practices but good thought, good word and good deed. There is no place for temples or images in the Veda and the Avesta. The duty of the householder is to maintain the fire and perform the sacrifice, *yajna*, *yasna*.

Zarathustra's religious reforms made Iran a significant force in the evolution of world civilisation. Some traces of Iranian beliefs are found in post-Apostolic Christianity, Muhammadanism, Gnosticism, Mendaeanism. Manichaeism with its ramifications extended to the days of Albigenses. Mithraism swept the



Roman Empire and constituted by all accounts the most formidable rival of nascent Christianity. "There are many features of Mithraic mysteries which are reminiscent of the Orphic and Dionysiac cults. But the later religion of Christianity shared even more striking parallels with it. The use of the idea of brotherhood, purification by baptism, communion, a Lord's supper, a birth of the saviour on December 25th, a sabbath on Sunday, an asceticism of abstinence and continence, a heaven and a hell, a flood early in history, immortality of the soul, a last judgement, a resurrection of the dead, a meditating Logos, which was one of a Trinity and many other resemblances which have often been noted." When Constantine proclaimed Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire, Mithraism suffered persecution and declined though it had a temporary revival under Julian the Apostate (A.D.331-353).

Even today the soul of Ancient Iran is not dead. Islam adjusted itself to the Iranian attitude to life and developed the Sufi movement.

In 1935, Persia changed her name to Iran, a variation of the word Aryan. This was done to stress the ethnic contrast with the semitic people. Though Moslem, Iran is not Arab.

## X

The essential Greek mind was sane, balanced, scientific. Whether in literature, fine arts, politics or history, the Greek mind insisted on exactness, proportion and shrank from the infinite and the unlimited. Modern science with its realistic outlook on life is a continuation of the Greek spirit.

Pythagoras, Plato and the Mystery religions indicated a different tendency in Greek thought. They were not content with the earthly perfection which was visible and could be reached by human endeavour. They

sought for the "heavenly city" whose builder is God. In the Mystery religions the spiritual world was a perceptible reality to those who had undergone the training.

In Plato we find two currents of thought, the naturalistic and the idealistic. The former is in accordance with the traditional Greek religion.

The Orphic influence has been prominent in the idealistic view. God "holds the beginning, the end and the centre of all things that exist." God is the measure of all things. The soul is immortal. As it existed before birth in a body will it be after. When men die only their bodies perish. Death is the disconnection of the soul and the body. The soul is reason, like the charioteer driving the two steeds, one the disciplined emotions and the other the undisciplined appetites. In certain varieties of Orphism we have prophets and sacred literature. The God suffers, dies and rises in glory. The faithful are redeemed from original sin. There is mystical resurrection and after death union with God. A rule of purity and of asceticism is enjoined. Life is looked upon as a dolorous place that the soul should pass through to purify itself.

In *Gorgias* Plato declared that "Euripides may have been right in saying: " Who knows if life be not death and death life?" *Epinomis* may be a work of Plato's old age or a spurious early Hellenistic work. It deplored this world and life, sought wisdom rather than knowledge.

In the year 327 B.C. Alexander the Great penetrated up to the Indus. Though the Greek sovereignty in the Punjab came to an end ten years later, colonists, descendants of the soldiers of Alexander, were left behind in North India.

Since the Hellenisation of Egypt through the conquests of Alexander, Alexandria became the centre of exchange between Indian and the West. The Greek writers



speak first of the Indian wise men, hermits and ascetics after the time of Alexander.

The Roman mind was severely practical and adopted a utilitarian view of the world as a fit place to live in. A cross fertilisation with the Stoicism of the Greeks produced Marcus Aurelius. He is an exception which proves the rule the Roman mind concentrated on secular affairs and had a limited spiritual vision.

## XI

The Jews entered the Roman world and from the Jewish records we find that their conceptions were somewhat limited, except for the Prophets and the Psalms. Moses laid the foundations of a monotheism which gave a definite orientation to western culture. His incipient monotheism did not deny the existence of other gods. The Jews were the chosen people because they were said to be the first to look beyond the powers of nature to God as pure spirit. They sensed the transcendent unity unique and mysterious as the origin of all being. "Hear, O Israel, Yahweh is God. Yahweh is one". To this one God were ascribed all the attributes and functions which their pagan contemporaries gave to other divinities. Some of the prophets recognised the universality of God. The prophet Amos makes the Lord say: "Are you not as the children of the Ethiopians unto me, O children of Israel, saith the Lord. Have I not brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt? And the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir?" Malachi says: "Have we not all one father? Has not one God created us? Why then are we faithless to one another." We believe in one Divine Reality and should therefore feel that we belong to one family and submit to obligation of standing by the side of one another.

The Jews were told: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image or any likeness of anything." We have

to find within us what no symbol derived from nature can express. They were asked to lift their hearts to lonely heights, where, far beyond nature, God speaks to the inner being of man himself. Moses gave the Ten Commandments providing us with a clear concept of good and evil. His vision transcended the experiences of racial or tribal denials. He insisted on moral freedom and responsibility. Duties are not restricted to the Jews.

The God of the Jews is profoundly interested and involved in what is happening to man and nature. The Jews tend to render every religious experience and value into terms of history and social reality. Religion is not separated from the national life of the Jews. Its defeats, exile and suffering are treated as the results of the failure to implement God's will in society. All life and existence are seen in historical terms of relationship and mutuality.

Mystic tendencies developed in Judaism. Simeon ben Yohai (second century A.D.) wrote a commentary on the Pentateuch, which shows the influence of Neo-Platonism. In the latter literature of Kabbala, the ideas are thoughts in the mind of God, the universe is created by a series of emanations and the corruptible body is the source of evil. Maimonides (12th century) tried to reconcile the reason of Aristotle with the revelation of the Hebrew scriptures. The Greeks struggled to discover "conscience" and the Romans grouped for the principles of justice. The Prophets and the Psalmists formed the spiritual preparation for Christianity.

Judaism probably took over from Zoroastrianism the idea that the resurrection will see the body restored and reunited with the soul so that the whole man may stand at the bar of judgement before God for receiving rewards or retribution for the deeds of the mortal life.

The Greek philosophy which the Jews, Christians and Muslims took over was not Hellenic but it was Hellenistic. It issued not from Athens but from



Alexandria. The Bible was translated into Greek by Jewish Scholars in Alexandria Neo-Platonism started when Greek nationalism was opened to the Jews. Philo was the chief founder of Neo-Platonism which is different from Platonism since it subordinates reason to revelation. There is absoluteness of belief which is not present in Plato. There can be no speculation where there is certainty of belief. For Philo the truth is given in the Jewish scriptures. There is less interest in the finite and in nature. For Philo the purpose of the individual was the service of society, especially the Greek; the Neo-Platonists extended it to the whole world. The *Polis*, as Philo said, was to become the *megalopolis*. The Logos, for him was the universal law, Philo tried to reconcile Greek philosophy with Judaism.

## XII

Christianity did not arise in a vacuum. It had obvious relations with the Old Testament, the Qumran sect, Pharisaism and other currents in Judaism. In the period that lay between the Old and the New Testament many works were written representing not only orthodox Judaism but sectarian developments.

Judaism and Christianity are the two inheritors of the Divine will. Jesus did not reject Sinai. He held that not one jot or little of the law should pass away and that the Scribes sat in the seat of Moses and should be obeyed. When Jesus asked his followers to go further and adopt a standard of forgiveness, of purity and of love, he broke off from the legal ideas of righteousness. "We preach Christ crucified", said St. Paul, "to the Jews, a stumbling block; to the Greeks, foolishness of God is wiser than man and the weaknesses of God are stronger than man." This brought about a transvaluation of all values. The picture of love given in the New Testament undermined the Jewish principle of justice based on exact requital, the Greek ideal of human perfection and the Roman concept of law and order. We read: "Serve one another in love."

"Let him that aspires to greatness serve all mankind." Recompense to no man evil for evil. Let no thyself succumb to evil, but overcome evil with good." In the account of love in the first epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, Chapter XIII, we find the words: "Love suffereth long and is kind; it envieth not, it vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up; doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things; believeth all things; hopeth all things; endureth all things." The principle of the Cross, of suffering without limit and without retaliation was repugnant to classical antiquity but was quite familiar to Indian thought in its Brahmanical; Buddhist and Jaina forms which hold that non-violence or *ahimsa* is the crown of all religion. This is the logical consequence of belief in the unseen Reality. The gaze of the people was turned on the infinite. "The things that are seen are temporal; but the things that are unseen are eternal." This has been the central principle of Indian wisdom.

Christianity is based on inner experience symbolised by the events from Easter to Pentecost. It was Paul's vision at Damascus which changed him from an enemy into a great champion of Christianity. He could contact the Greeks who believed in an "Unknown God" in an empty temple for even their great art could not help them to express the transcendental nature of the Supreme. St. Paul said: "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God ...neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Jesus did not attempt to give an answer to Pilate's question, "What is truth?" — though in another contest he is reported to have said "I am the Truth". He who experiences truth as a living spiritual reality becomes one with it.

On a Sabbath morning disciple approached Jesus to tell him of a farmer whom he had just caught tilling his



land. "What will be the punishment for this terrible sin?" Jesus paused a while and said: "If that man acts in ignorance his punishment will be severe indeed; if he knows what he does he is one of the blessed." Anyone who has knowledge of the Divine exceeds legalistic conformity.

According to the Legend, the experience of Peter, when he fled from the Roman prison, had no element of command or compulsion but only an appeal to the faculties of reason and love, bearing out Jesus's words to his disciple: "Henceforth I call you not servants...but I have called you friends."

Truth is a mystery that can be uttered only in parables. St. Mark makes Jesus say: "Unto you is given the mystery of the Kingdom of God, but unto them who are outside all things are announced in parables." Peter asks: "Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us or even to all."

This new religion absorbed the teaching of the Psalms and the Prophets. "Christ's new Commandment is the old Commandment which you had from the beginning." It assimilated the views of the greatest of the Greek thinkers, Plato. His writings were regarded as *praeparatio evangelic*. Christian thinkers began to express their ideas of the Infinite in Plato's language. Though the Roman Empire instinctively persecuted the new faith, the Stoic outlook on the universe held the minds of the greatest Roman. The new message was expressed in the phrase of the Hebrew prophets, the passage of Plato and the aphorisms of the Stoics.

St. Paul and St. John linked primitive Christian thought to the passages in the Jewish scriptures which spoke of the redeeming value of suffering as well as to the idealism of Plato and the Stoics. The crown of this new way of life is reached in the Prologue of St. John's Gospel and in the conclusion of the same writer's epistles that God is love.

Christian teaching which carried with it some of the atmosphere of Eastern mystical religion produced a remarkable revival of Platonism under Porphyry and Plotinus at Alexandria.

In Augustine we have the surrender of classical antiquity to the Christian faith. He gave classic expression to the new religious philosophy which still remains paramount. In his search after God he sought to fathom the infinite depths of the human soul to find there a true reflection of the Divine.

Many followed Augustine in the mystical way and tried to sound the depths of the human spirit in its search for God. They climbed painfully but triumphantly the ascent which they learned to call the *Scala Perfectionis*, the steep highway of the soul which leads to the Beatific vision. The "purgation" with which it begins leads on to 'Illumination" and finds its goal in "union". Those who follow this path enter into the inner depths of their own personality and seek out the soul's direct relation to God. Benedict, Bernard, Abelard, Francis, Dante, Thomas a Kempis, they all represent in varying degrees and in different ways the passionate search of the human soul for the Divine Reality. They all shudder at the thought of shutting up the Divine Reality in any form or denomination.

According to St. Thomas Aquinas "the ultimate end of rational creatures is the vision of God." He adds: "Those three run together, vision, the perfect knowledge of an intelligible end; comprehension, the presence of the end; delight or enjoyment, the ease of the lover with the beloved."

The mystic souls do not seldom neglect and despise the intellectual light and fail to realise its vital purpose as a guide to the soul. Deep down, even in St. Paul, we find a perpetual conflict between matter and spirit. Unresolved and seemingly unresolvable, this dualism was



profound. The war between the soul and the flesh was carried on with an unrelenting zeal throughout the Middle Ages. This gave rise to incredible dogmas and hampered healthy intellectual growth of mankind.

The true spirit of mystic idealism is found in a saying attributed to Saint Theresa of Avila (1515-1582 A.D.) "Christ hath no body on earth now but yours, no hands but yours; no feet but yours; yours are the eyes through which Christ's compassion on the world looks out. Your are the feet with which He is to go about doing good; and yours are the hands with which He is to bless us now."

The thinking mind of the West rebelled against the other-worldly outlook and swung back on the full tide of the classical renaissance, to the conception of virtue as engaged in the improvement of the earthly existence. The discoveries of modern science are made by adherents to the rational methods of observation and experiment and the abandonment of dogma as a source of knowledge.

Speaking of the Old Testament, Origen says that "it is like a rough model necessary but not useful when the statue is there. It is like a lamp; absurd to keep it when the sun has risen." Spinoza brought Judaism and Christianity nearer each other. In *Epistle 73*, he writes: "It is not as I believe, absolutely necessary to salvation to 'know Christ according to the flesh'; but it is necessary to know the eternal son of God, i.e. God's eternal wisdom, which has manifested itself in all things, especially in the human mind, and most of all in Jesus Christ. For this wisdom alone teaches what is true and false, good and bad; without it, therefore no one can attain to the state of blessedness."

### XIII

Islam is not to be treated as emphasising exclusively pure transcendence. Muhammad was a man of profound experience. This gave him a compelling personal

conviction which raised him from an ordinary trader into a flaming prophet. In Islam, the man of knowledge occupies the highest place. The Quran says that "knowledge lights the way to heaven." Sufism developed mystic literature of great value.

The great Arab philosopher Al-Kindi who died in 870 A.D. was greatly influenced by Neo-Platonism. For him the world soul is intermediate between God and the world and is the first emanation; and the human soul was an emanation from it. Al-Farabi (died 950 A.D.) used Neo-Platonic doctrines in interpreting the Quran. Ibn Sina (Avicenna 980-1037 A.D.) is known for his doctrine of the universals. He believes that universals exist apart from physical things and human minds and they exist as thoughts in the mind of God. Al-Ghazali and Averroes (12th century) tried to reconcile reason with Muslim revelation. Al-Ghazali (1058-1128 A.D.) became convinced that the way of the mystics was the only true path to the knowledge of God and of eternal life.

The Quran say that God spoke of old to every prophet in turn, each according to his special mark of favour: "to Moses and Aaron the illumination, and a light and a warning for the God-fearing"; "unto Abraham his direction, for We knew him worthy;" "and we gave Soloman insight into the affair, and no both of them (David and Soloman) We bestowed wisdom and insight; and We constrained the mountains and the birds to join with David in Our praise, and to Soloman We subjected the strongly blowing wind; it sped at his bidding to the land We had blessed."

#### XIV

Protestantism revolted against institutionalised Christianity and returned to the sources of the Revelation in the Bible. The relations between the individual and God can be justified by faith and not by reason. The



individual can attain an intuitive knowledge of God which is unmediated by intuitions or theologies. Protestantism which has no official theology gave rise to tolerance and liberalism.

The romantic element was not altogether eclipsed in Christianity. The Cambridge Neo-Platonism of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries endeavoured to re-introduce both mysticism and rationalism into Christianity. They were "Plotinists rather than Platonists" as Coleridge observed.

In the eighteenth century, Protestantism produced the Evangelical revival which gave even to the poorest a mystical faith. George Fox and the Society of Friends represented another movement of mystical thought and life. William Penn says: "A recluse life, the boasted righteousness of some is not recommendable....The Christian convent and monastery are within, where the soul is encloistered from sin...True godliness doesn't turn men out of the world but enables them to live better in it, and excites their endeavour to mend it; not hide their candle under a bushel, but set it upon a table in a candlestick." The Quakers believe that creeds and rites are channels of spiritual insight and not insight itself. The mystical movement spread in Germany and other parts of Europe.

Schleiermacher grasped the transcendent unity of religions. "The deeper you progress in religion, the more the whole religious world will appear to you as an indivisible whole."

The Unitarian Church developed in Boston and its leader William Ellery Channing (1780-1842) proclaimed "one sublime idea" which he defined as "the greatness of the soul, its divinity, its union with God by spiritual likeness, its receptivity of his spirit, its self-forming power, its destination to ineffable glory, its immortality." For him sectarian narrowness and denominational

aggressiveness were impossible. His spirit influenced the leaders of the movement who were responsible for the foundation of the Divinity School of Harvard University in 1816.

In 1811 W.E. Channing wrote that the true church consists of "Christ's friends and followers who truly imbibe his spirit, no matter by what name they are called, in what house they worship, by what peculiarities of mode and opinion they are distinguished, under what sky they live or what language they speak."

## XV

The Christian religion met its first challenge when it entered the Graeco-Roman world. For centuries the highest minds of the Church applied themselves to this problem and as a result Christian theology emerged greatly enriched. The second challenge was from the recent developments of science which reveal the universality and unity of the world around us and within us. From this encounter Christian thought was profoundly modified. There is today a truer, deeper intellectual understanding of the Christian faith. The challenge today is from the presence of other religions of which there is greater appreciation and understanding, and great minds of the Christian world are applying themselves to this vital issue. Here in the Harvard University some of the great minds were stimulated by the resurgence of the non-Christian religions.

The great philosophers who taught in Harvard University, Josiah Royce, William James, A.N. Whitehead and W.E. Hocking were all ecumenical men. They believed in God because of their personal experiences. "If you ask what these experiences are," William James says, "they are conversations with the unseen, voices and visions, responses to prayer, change of heart, deliverances from fear, inflowings of help, assurances of support,



whenever certain persons set their own internal attitude in certain appropriate ways. " In his notes for his famous Gifford Lectures, William James said: "Remember that the whole point lies in really *believing* that, through a certain point or part in you, you coalesce and are identical with the Eternal. This seems to be the saving belief both in Christianity and in Vedantism."

Josiah Royce places the problem of Christianity in the relation of each person to the community whose spirit is the interpreter of his moral experience. Loyalty to the world community is inseparable from love." Every one that loveth is born of God."

When A.N. Whitehead defines religion as "what the individual does with his solitariness," he makes out that it is inward experience. We must have the capacity to take our stand within the self, withdraw serenely into one's incorruptible depths. Whitehead complains that the interpreters of Christianity identify the experience with concepts with disastrous results. "You get it in all of the following interpreters of Christianity from Augustine, even in Francis of Assisi....Their heart were right but their heads were wrong. In St. Francis, for example, it is hardly credible that the two words, that of grace and mercy and that of eternal damnation, could exist in one and the same breast. This theological disaster is what I mean when I speak of the mischief which follows from banishing novelty from trying to formulate your truth, setting up declare: "This is all there is to be known on the subject and discussion is closed."

Professor William Ernest Hocking, who is happily still with us, writes: "The partial de-Christianisation of the West brought about by the various secular movement is destined to work not only to the net advantage of the West but also to that of a reconceived Christianity." He mentions the continuing need for reconception in view of its present unfinishedness and also of the depth and

breadth of the religious experience of other land. "Our Christianity is in need of reconception through a deeper and humbler intercourse with the soul of the East in its age-long acceptance of a searching self-discipline."

## XVI

Today when humanity is in grave danger and our civilisation is precariously balanced, we must rediscover lost values and recapture reverence and wonder which have fallen victims to the increasing secularisation of human life and consciousness. Mankind has always recognised greatness. The saying and deeds of the great are not mere museum pieces but are answers to the basic question of mankind.

In every religion we have people who do not believe in provincialism, who emphasise religion as experience to be attained by self-conquest and self-transformation, appreciation of other faiths, and a sense of loyalty to the world community. If man is to achieve wholeness for himself and for the world, if he seeks harmonious living he must know other religions. We must set aside differences caused by the accident of geography and history and accept the universal ideas transmitted by a common heritage. It should become as normal for an American or a European student to be familiar with the civilisations of the East, the Chinese, the Japanese and the Indian as he is now with the bases of European civilisation, in the Greek, the Roman and the Judaic cultures.

The different religions should be regarded as comrades in a joint enterprise in facing the common problems of the peaceful co-existence of the peoples, international welfare and justice, racial equality and political independence of all peoples.

A study of the different forms of religious life may give us some idea of the deep significance of religion for



the life of man. The different religions are to be used as building stones for the development of a human culture in which the adherents of the different religions may be fraternally united as the children of one Supreme. All religions convey to their followers a message of abiding hope. The world will give birth to a new faith which will be but the old faith in another form, the faith of all ages, the potential divinity of man which will work for the supreme purpose written in our hearts and souls, the unity of mankind. It is my hope and prayer that in this Center for the study of World Religions (Harvard) unbelief shall disappear and superstition shall not enslave the mind and all those who meet here shall recognise that they are brothers, one in spirit and one in fellowship.

### APPENDIX III

## Dr. S. Radhakrishnan on Rabindranath Tagore

**I**t is the peculiar glory of great literature that it lasts much longer than kings and dynasties. History bears witness to the power of the human spirit, which endures longer than dynasties creeds. The political world of Homer is dead while his song is living today. The splendour of Rome has vanished, but the poetry of Virgil is yet vital. The dreams of Kalidasa still moves us like the cry of a living voice, with their poignant sense of tears of human relations, while the Ujjain of which he was the ornament has left her memory to his keeping. The great medieval potentates are forgotten but the song of Dante is still cherished; and the Elizabethan age will be remembered as long as the English language lives on account of its Shakespeare. When our Lords and leaders pass into oblivion, Tagore will continue to enchant us by his music and poetry; for though he is an Indian, the value of his work lies not in any tribal or national characteristics, but in those elements of universality which appeal to the whole world. He has added to the sweetness of life, to the statue of civilisation.

### II

## EMPHASIS ON THE SPIRITUAL

To many a young Indian in these changing times Rabindranath's voice has been a comfort and a stimulus. When we are weighed down by the burden of defeated



hopes and stand dazed at the conquests of science and organisation, when our minds lose their moorings and sense of direction, he comes to us instilling hope into our hearts and courage into our minds. He points out that though our heads are bleeding they are not bowed down, and that the value of success need not be judged by standards of wealth and power. The true tests of civilisation are spiritual: dignity and power of suffering. Wealth, power and efficiency are the appurtenances of life and not life itself. The significance of things are the personal ones which are beyond the reach of science and organisation.

In his insistence on the supremacy of spiritual values as central to the good life and social order, Rabindranath is at one with the long tradition of Indian thinkers. In him we find the eternal voice of India, old and yet new. In spite of the vicissitudes of fortune and the driftings of history, India has kept her essential spirit alive. The self of man is not to be confused with the physical body or the intellect. There is something deeper than intellect, mind and body, the real self, which is one with the self of all goodness, truth and beauty. To aim at that and make it a living presence is the purpose of religion; to train oneself through purity; love and strength into conformity with that conception is the aim of ethics; to mould oneself to the pattern of that eternal being is the consummation of our aesthetic nature. One has to achieve not merely technical efficiency, but greatness of spirit.

When we walk into the night and see the stars keeping the eternal watch, we experience a sense of awe before their remoteness of annihilation before their immutability of utter insignificance before their immensity. The heart stops beating, breathing is suspended and our whole being receives a shock. Our petty interests and anxieties look pitifully small and sordid. There is a similar perturbation, a similar break in

the breath, when we listen to great poetry or gaze into a human soul. Philosophy and religion, art and literature, serve to heighten this spiritual consciousness. It is because, we have ignored this aspect of life that we find today so much instability, conflict and chaos in spite of intellectual advance and scientific progress. For over three centuries scientific inventions and discoveries have produced increased prosperity. Famines have practically disappeared, population has increased and the grimmer incidents of life like plagues and pestilences have been brought under control. As the sense of confidence and security about the social order spreads over the world, the spirit of curiosity and exploration, which was mainly responsible for the triumphs in the scientific and the technical regions became extended to the deeper thing of life. The world was soon robbed of its mystery and romance. A strange new world of hardness and brutality, of science and big business, arose, which prejudiced the order of love, beauty and happiness so very essential for the growth of the soul. Scepticism and agnosticism have become attractive to the modern mind. In the struggle between the sceptics and agnostics who doubt whether there is anything behind the universe and the spiritual positivists who affirm that the most vital reality is behind the universe, Rabindranath is with the latter.

There is a story about the visit of an Indian Philosopher to Socrates. It comes not from Plato or Xenophon but from Aristoxenes of the third century B.C. He relates how Socrates told the Indian stranger that his work consisted in enquiring about the life of men, and how the Indian smiled and said that none could understand things human who did not understand things divine. For the whole Western tradition, man is essentially a rational being, one who can think logically and act upon utilitarian principles. In the East, spiritual understanding and sympathy are of greater importance than intellectual ability. For thousands who talk one can think; for



thousands who think perhaps one sees and understands. What distinguishes man in this capacity for understanding.

Physical growth and intellectual efficiency cannot satisfy us. Even if we have extensive agriculture and efficient transportation and every one possess his own aeroplane and radio set, if all disease is eradicated, if workmen receive doles and pensions and every one lives to a green old age, there will still be unsatisfied aspirations, wistful yearning. Man does not live by bread alone nor by learning alone. We may recognise the world on the most up-to-date and efficient scientific lines, and make of it a vast commercial house where all the multiple activities of the human atoms are arranged for so that we have in it every group from the scullery maids and the errand boys doing their work in the basement cellars, up to the women of fashion making up their faces in the beauty parlours on the top floor, and may even succeed in transforming a society of human beings into swarm of ants; yet there will be unsatisfied longings; a thirst for ultimates. Even in that new world order, children will continue to laugh and cry, women to love and suffer, men to fight and struggle. The real greatness of man is due to his failure to his moving about in worlds unrealised, with vague misgivings. Man is a creature with a dual status. He partakes of the characters of both the seen and the unseen world. While he is a part of the natural order, he has in his the seed of spirit which makes him dissatisfied with his merely natural being. He is truly a creature of the boarderland with animal desires and spiritual yearnings and a life which is entirely given over the former cannot give him rest.

In his daily life of work and toil, when he tills the soil or governs the State, when he seeks wealth or pursue power, man is not himself. In such activities things are in the saddle. The making of money and the tending of

families absorb all one's time and strength. Things eternal and unseen get no chance. And yet events occur which disturb the complacency of superficial minds, events with which the sense of mystery and the feeling of uncertainty return. When in the sorrow of death or the suffering of despair, when trust is betrayed or love desecrated, when life becomes tasteless and unmeaning, man stretches forth his hands to heaven to know if perchance there is an answering presence behind the dark clouds; *mahantampurusam adityavarnam tamasah parastat*—it is then that he comes into touch with the supreme in the solitude of his consciousness in the realm of the profound and the intense. It is the world of light and love in which there is no language; but that of silence. It is the world of joy reveals itself in innumerable forms—*anandarupam amrtam yad vibhati*.

The poetry of human experience, the realities of life as distinct from its mere frills, are achieved in solitude. When we move away from the self, we move away from the only reality which is accessible to us. Man is himself in his religion and in his love. Both these are strictly personal and intimate, peculiar and sacred. If our society attempts to invade even this inner sanctuary; life will lose all its worth and genuineness. A man can share his possessions with others, but not his soul.

We have become so poor today that we cannot even recognise the treasures of spirit. In the rush and clamour of our conscious life we do not pay attention to the less audible elements of our being. The sudden thrills, the disturbing emotions, the flashes of insight, it is these that reveal to us the mystery, we are, and by these we apprehend the truth of things.

Only the man of serene mind can realise the spiritual meaning of life. Honesty with oneself is the condition of spiritual integrity. We must let in the light to illumine the secret places of the soul. Our pretensions and professions



are the barriers that shut us away from truth. We are more familiar with the things we have than with what we are. We are afraid to be alone with ourselves, face to face with our naked loneliness. We try to hide ourselves from the ourselves the truth by drugs or drunkenness, excitement or service. It is with an effort that we have to pull ourselves together, cultivate the inner life and abstract from the outer sheaths of body, mind and intellect. We then see the soul within and attain to a stillness of spirit. The discovery of inwardness is the essential basis of spiritual life.

So long as we lead outward lives, without being touched to our inward depths, we do not understand the meaning of life or the secrets of the soul. Those who live on the surface naturally have no faith in the life of spirit. They believe that they do their duty by religion if they accept the letter of faith. Such spiritual dependence is inconsistent with true religious life, of which the foundation is utter sincerity. A life without independent thought cannot comfort a spiritual being. It is lack of spiritual confidence that impels us to accept what others say about religious truth. But when once the individual in his freedom of spirit pursues truth and builds up a centre in himself, he has enough strength and stability to deal with all that happens to him. He is able to retain his peace and power even when he is faced by adverse conditions. Absolute serenity of spirit is the ultimate goal of human efforts and this is possible only for one who has deep faith in the creative spirit and is thus free from all petty desires. Naturally orthodox religion, whether as dogma or ritual means almost nothing to him.

### INSISTENCE OF LIFE

But to dwell in the realm of spirit does not mean that we should be indifferent to the realities of the world. It is a common temptation, to which Indian thinkers have

fallen more than once victims, that spirit is all that counts while life is an indifferent illusion and that all efforts directed to the improvement of man's outer life and society are sheer folly. Frequently the ideal of the cold wise man who refuses all activity in the world is exalted with the result that India has become the scene of a culture of dead men walking the earth peopled with ghosts. No one who holds himself aloof from the activities of the world and who is insensitive to its woes can be really wise. To practise virtue in a vacuum is impossible. Spiritual vision normally issues in a new power for good in the world of existence. The spiritual man does not turn his back on the realities of the world, but works in it with the sole object of creating better material and spiritual conditions. For spiritual life rises in the natural. Being a poet, Rabindranath uses the visible world as a means of shadowing forth the invisible. He touches the temporal with the light of the eternal. The material world becomes transparent as his spirit moves in it.

The world is not a snare nor its good a delusion. They are opportunities for self-development, pathways for realisation. This is the great tradition which has come down from the seers of the Upanishads and the author of the *Gita*. They delight in life for since God has taken upon Himself the bonds of creation, why should we not take upon ourselves the bonds of this world? We need not complain, if we are clothed in this warm garment of flesh. Human relationship are the mainspring of spiritual life. God is not a Sultan in the sky but is in all, through all over all. We worship Him in all the true objects of our worship, love Him whenever our love is true. In the woman who is good, we feel Him; in the man who is true we know Him. Tagore's *Hibbert Lectures on 'The Religion of Man'* (1931) ask us to realise the supreme in the heart of us all.

The great of the world work in it sensitive to its woes. When the Buddha preaches maitri and the *Gita*



teaches sneha for all, they mean that we can understand others only through love. To look upon life as an evil and treat the world as delusion is sheer ingratitude. In his play 'Sanyasi' of the 'Ascetic' Rabindranath points out how outraged nature had her revenge on the ascetic who tries to gain a victory over her by cutting away the bonds of human desires and affections. He attempted to arrive at a true knowledge of the world by cutting himself off from it. A little girl brought him back from the reign of abstraction into the play of life. No asceticism is ever equal to the task of suppressing living beauty. The ascetic's inmost defences went down before the rapture of beauty, and clamant life compelled him to fling open the doors. The Sanyasi discovered that the great is to be found in the small, the infinite within the bounds of and from the eternal freedom of the soul in love. We must bring heaven down to earth, put eternity into an hour and realise God in this world. Ascetics are like cut flowers in metal vases. They are beautiful to contemplate for a while but they soon wither, being without nourishment from the soil. To be firm and rooted, man must consent to be nourished on the life. Asceticism, however necessary it may be for the growth of the person, cannot be confused with a mere refusal of the nourishment, by which the growth is helped. The saints do not refuse to sit at the rich man's table nor do they object to the scent of precious ointment.

It is foolish to fancy that God enjoys our sorrows and sufferings, our pains and fasts, and loves those who tax themselves to the uttermost. Life is a great gift and those who do not love it are unworthy of it. Those who lay waste their souls and call it peace cannot obtain the support of Tagore for their action.

One need not enter a convent or become an ascetic to reject life. Many of us reject life by surrounding ourselves with taboos and prohibitions. Interpreting the main

intention of Hindu thought, Tagore insists on a loyal acceptance of life. We must face life as an adventure and give full play to its possibilities.

Religion speaks to us in many dialects. It has diverse complexions. And yet it has one true voice, the voice of human pity and compassion of mercy, of patient love and to that voice we must do all we can to listen. Naturally, a sensitive soul is bound to be outraged by the social order which is at the end of one age and the beginning to another. We say there is a revolution in Russia or Spain; but there is one in our country too. We also have our guillotines and our victims, though many of those who suffer still go about with their heads on their shoulders. We have become were walking and talking phantoms. With our languid paleness and lack of depth, which we try to cover by paint and pose our lives remind us of the mannequis in the shop windows of Chowringhee.

Our deepest passions are debased by the conditions imposed by society. Add to this the appalling poverty and ignorance in which many people live. If they are somewhat sensitive in temper, they are compelled to spend perturbed nights of anguish and long monotonous days of struggle, measuring time by the throbs of pain and the memories of bitterness. When dim thoughts of suicide rush through their overcrowded heads, they stare at the ceiling and smoke a cigarette. Rabindranath has not much sympathy with the prevalent view that social service consists simply in joining leagues to stop cigarette-smoking or to advance the practice of birth control. It consists in enabling people to live with intensity of being.

As a poet despises organisation and believes in each man living his own life in his own way. He is the champion of the individual in his age-long struggle against the mass tyranny which crushes him. The fate of one who sets himself against the established order is abuse and criticism, persecution and fierce solitariness.



Tagore is the poet of sorrow and suffering. The pathos of men's striving, the bitterness of life submerged in the shadows, the waste and loneliness of women's lives have found few more profoundly moved spectators. To this audience it is scarcely necessary to refer to the innumerable instance where the poet reveals the anguish that is implicit in common situations.

The most sacred of all human relations is love; and whatever our scriptures may say, our practice is immoral because it demands the beauties of self-control and self-abnegation from only one sex. So long as our women are treated as mere servants and toys of the undisciplined male, the social order will continue to be corrupt. The convention that a woman's virtues are chastity and submissiveness to man is altogether too flimsy an excuse for masculine tyranny. What is virtue in a man is virtue in a woman. It is unfortunate that there are many among us who are cold-blooded libertines who unscrupulously use women as instruments of their lust. They are the human animals the slaves of sense.

The body is the temple of the spirit, the apparatus of spiritual growth. To regard the body or part of it as indescant or vile is the sin of impiety. To treat it as cheap and vulgar is equally impious. Physical union without love is the essence of prostitution. This is true within as without marriage. A woman who gives herself to a man for whom she has no love, as a mere act of duty just because she is his wife, is as cruelly abusing herself as the husband who insists on his rights. Love is spiritual and aesthetic, a matter of conscience and good taste and not one of law or codes. Married life without love is like slave labour. Obedience, to ecclesiastical pundits or social rules is a form of self-indulgence, even as action in obedience to one's deepest being is the imperative command of life. As beauty is higher than harmony, as truth is higher than consistency, so is love higher than law. Like fire it purifies everything.

In his play 'Sati', Uma refuses to accept the man who never won her love even though he was her chosen husband, whatever pledges others may have given for her. When she cuts herself away from Jigaji, to whom she was sacredly affianced, and accepts another, she defends herself by saying, 'My body was yielded only after love had given me'. When her mother says, 'Touch me not with impure hands,' she replies, 'I am as pure as yourself.'

Her eloquent dignified bearing cuts her father to the quick and he says: 'Come to me, my darling child: mere vanity are those man-made laws, splashing like spray against the rock of heaven's ordinance'. Our legal providers and protectors do not realise that our women possess souls, yearning for understanding, for someone to share their dreams and their longings; and when a man and a woman offer to each other, not their strength or rank or fortune but their weakness, their desolation, their heart's need, they enter into a region which is not built by the labour of human hands but by the love of their hearts. Their union is consecrated though it may not be approved.

In all Rabindranath's work three features are striking. (1) the ultimateness of spiritual values to be obtained by inward honesty and cultivation of inner life; (2) the futility of mere negation or renunciation and the need for a holy or a whole development of life, and (3) the positive attitude of sympathy for all, even the lowly and the lost. It is a matter of satisfaction to find an Indian leader insisting on these real values of life at a time when so many old things are crumbling away and a thousand new ones are springing up.



## APPENDIX IV

### Dr. S. Radhakrishnan on Nehru

**F**RIENDS: We are grateful to the distinguished guests who have come from abroad to express their sympathy with us and give comfort to us in this tragic hour of our history. We are extremely touched by their solicitude for us at this moment.

Jawaharlal was not merely a servant of the Indian nation but was a servant of suffering humanity. Appalled by the spectacular developments in nuclear physics, he felt that the greatest enemy man has to fight is not this nation or that nation but war itself. So he tried his best, by the principles of peaceful coexistence, co-operation and non-alignment to bring about a better understanding among the nations. All conflicts spring from misunderstanding and by producing understanding we try to reduce the rigour of the conflicts.

The blow which has fallen on us is the greatest we have had after the passing away of Mahatma Gandhi and Nehru was trying to put into practice all the great ideals which Mahatmaji made "I wish to wipe every tear from every human eye." Jawaharlal was fond of repeating that statement and by the application of science and technology to the reconstruction of our social order, he tried to alleviate the suffering of our common people and make them feel that they were being treated as full first class citizens of our country. Insistence on science and social reconstruction has been the fundamental feature in his outlook.

Besides, he felt very strongly that nations like individuals, should also observe moral principles. They

have to obey certain moral obligations. They cannot be regarded as above all rules. The State must have conscience of its own. If it loses its conscience, it may pile up wealth, it may make extraordinarily powerful weapons, but its ultimate end is sure. So it is that Jawaharlal told us to practise morality even with regard to our State affairs. We have a sentence which says:

*Dharmo rakshati rakshitah*

If we protect dharma, dharma will protect us. If we neglect dharma, we will also be neglected by dharma. It is a rule which is there in the nature of things and which calls upon all of us to practise some self-restraint even with regard to our national interests. When our economic and political interests come into conflict, we must throw away the economic and political interests and try to uphold the spiritual interests. On that famous day in 1947, August 14, Jawaharlal Nehru told us standing there filled with the majesty of the hour looking at the panorama of all history—past, present and future—"I have come to the conclusion that it will not be possible for us to regain our past glory unless we observe certain moral principles. It is that pledge we have to take today when we remember him that it is necessary for us to subordinate our self-interest and put the requirement of the nation and of humanity higher than our own self-interest. That is the only way in which our nation can progress. Whatever be the work which we are doing the only question we should ask is: 'Am I here trying to serve my own interest or am I serving the requirements of my nation?' That is the way in which every problem should be faced and tackled."

I hope earnestly that all those who are here will not merely pay their homage to Jawaharlal Nehru. No homage is necessary of him. Modern India is the greatest monument which he has built for himself. We should try to carry out those great ideals for which he had stood without any haste and without any rest. We must go forward building a new India.



## APPENDIX V

### The Principal Works of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan

- 1918 *The Philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore* (Macmillan)
- 1920 *The Reign of Religion in Contemporary Philosophy* (Macmillan)
- 1923 *Indian Philosophy* (Vol.I) (George Allen & Unwin)
- 1926 *The Hindu View of Life*
- 1928 *The Religion We Need* (Earnest Benn) London
- 1929 *Kalki or the Future of Civilization* (Kegan Paul & Company)
- 1932 *An Idealist View of Life* (Hibbert Lectures) George Allen & Inwin
- 1933 *East and West in Religion*
- 1936 *Freedom and Culture*
- 1936 *The Heart of Hindustan* (G.A. Naesan, Madras)
- 1937 *Religion in Transition* (Contains the Chapter "My Search for Truth")
- 1938 *Gautama the Buddha* (British Academy Lectures) Oxford University Press
- 1939 *Mahatma Gandhi* (Essays and Reflection on his life and work) George Allen & Unwin
- 1944 *India and China*, Hindi Kitab (Bombay)
- 1944 *Education, Politics and War* (A collection of addresses) International Book Service, Poona

- 1945 *Is this peace?* (Hindi Kitab) Bombay
- 1947 *Religion and Society* (Kamala Lectures) George Allen & Unwin.
- 1948 *The Bhagavadgita* (with Introductory Essays. Sanskrit Text, English Translation and Notes) George Allen & Unwin
- 1949 *Great Indians* (A collection of his lectures on Great Indians) Hind Kitab, Bombay
- 1949 *The University Education Commission Report* (of which he was the chairman) Publications Division
- 1950 *The Dharmapada* (with introductory Essays, Pali Text, English Translation and Notes) Oxford University Press
- 1952 *An Anthology* (of Radhakrishnan Writings) by Marlow, George Allen & Unwin
- 1952 *The Religion of the Spirit and World's Need: Fragments of a Confession* (The Indian Philosophy of Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan)  
The Library of Living Philosophers.  
Tudor Publishing Company, New York
- 1952 *History of Philosophy* Vols 2.  
(George Allen & Unwin)
- 1953 *The Principal Upanishads*, (George Allen & Unwin)
- 1955 *East and West: Some reflections*  
(First series in Bently Memorial Lectures)  
(George Allen & Unwin)
- 1956 *Recovery of Faith* (World Perspective Series) George Allen & Unwin
- 1956 *Occasional Speeches & Writings* (II Volumes)  
(February 1956-February 1957) Publication Division
- 1957 *A Source Book in Indian Philosophy* Ed. by Dr. Radhakrishnan and Charles A Moore: Lecture,

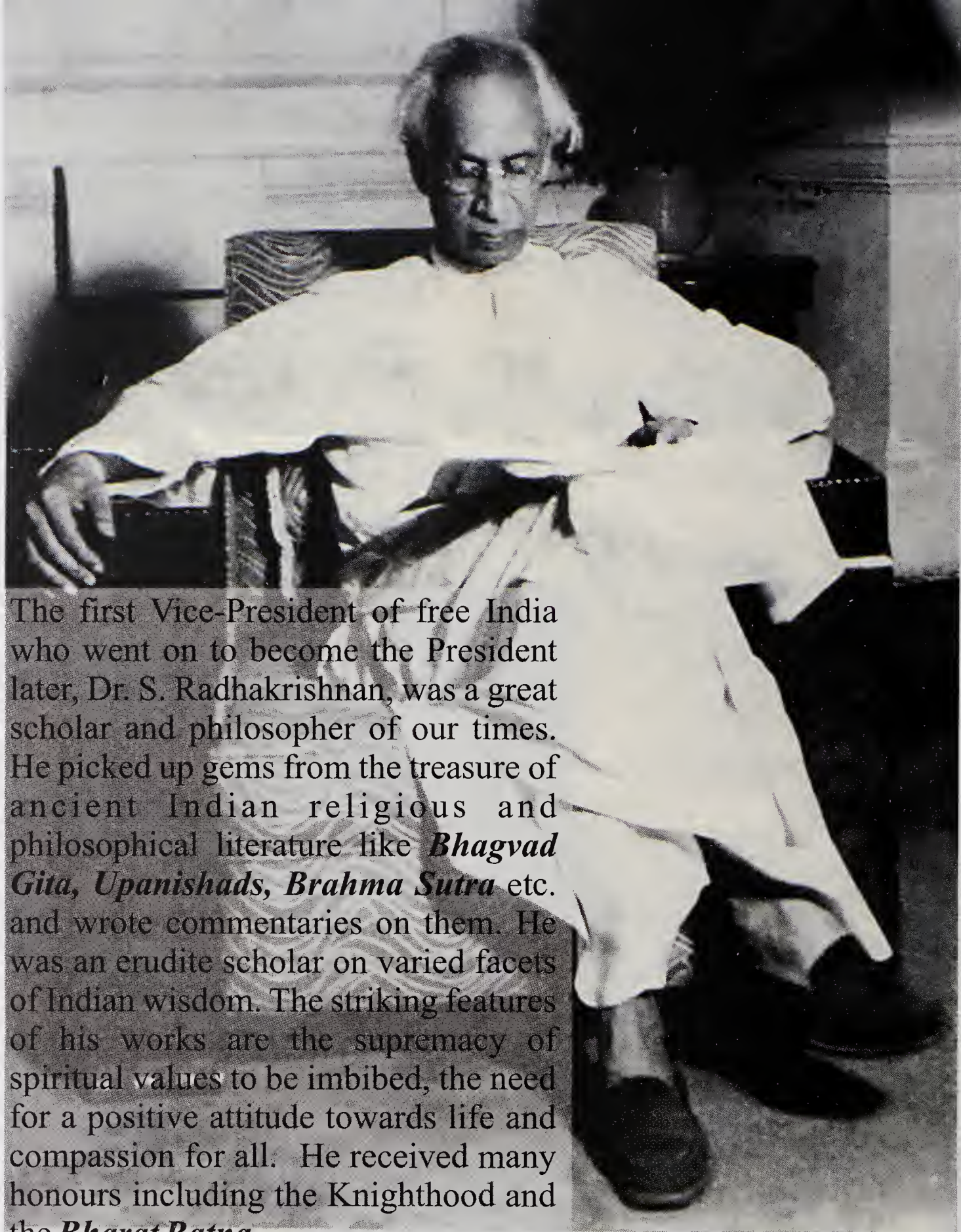


Columbia University; Princeton University Press, New Jersey.

- 1960 *Occasional Speeches & Writings* (Combined Edition) (Oct. 1952-Feb. 1959) Publications Division
- 1960 *The Brahma Sutra: The Philosophy of spiritual Life* Translated with an Introduction and Notes George Allen & Unwin
- 1960 *The Concept of Man* (Ed.P.T. Rajan) George Allen & Unwin
- 1961 *Fellowship of Faiths*  
Opening Address to the Centre for the study of world Religions: Harvard: the Centre for the Study of World Religions. Harvard Divinity School.
- 1963 *Occasional Speeches* (Third Series) (July 1959-May 1962) Publications Division
- 1965 *President's Speeches and Writings* (May 1962-May 1965) Publication Division
- 1965 *On Nehru*, Publications Division
- 1967 *Religion in Changing World* (George Allen & Unwin)
- 1969 *Radhakrishnan Reader: An Anthology* Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay







The first Vice-President of free India who went on to become the President later, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, was a great scholar and philosopher of our times. He picked up gems from the treasure of ancient Indian religious and philosophical literature like *Bhagvad Gita*, *Upanishads*, *Brahma Sutra* etc. and wrote commentaries on them. He was an erudite scholar on varied facets of Indian wisdom. The striking features of his works are the supremacy of spiritual values to be imbibed, the need for a positive attitude towards life and compassion for all. He received many honours including the Knighthood and the *Bharat Ratna*.

The author of this book, a distinguished scholar of philosophy and academician, was associated with several prestigious universities. He has written several books on ancient Indian philosophy and religion.



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